

**Supporting Pupils with Additional Support Needs in
Mainstream Settings: The Views of Pupils**

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Student Declaration

I, Elizabeth Herd, declare that the Doctor of Education entitled *Supporting Pupils with Additional Support Needs in Mainstream Settings: The Views of Pupils* is, except where otherwise indicated, my own work. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award for any academic degree or diploma.

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**Abstract: Supporting Pupils with Additional Support Needs In Mainstream Settings:
The Views of Pupils**

This thesis is the study of experiences of a group of mainstream secondary pupils identified as having additional support needs within the terms of the Education (Additional Support For Learning) (Scotland) Act (2004). This means that they have been categorised as having entitlements to whatever support they require to ensure that they can attain good educational outcomes. Prior to the 2004 legislation, practices were based on categorisation of such pupils into separate, often segregated, provision which reflected assumptions about their restricted potential.

The 2004 legislation is part of a policy agenda concerned with social justice and equity of educational provision for all pupils. It requires that all barriers to learning are removed for each individual pupil. Such a policy shift, and the move towards an inclusive person-centred approach, seem consistent with Scottish education as it is widely regarded, that is, with a strong tradition of, and a commitment to, egalitarianism. However, there is research which also suggests that Scottish education has been, and continues to be, meritocratic and with a strong focus on academic attainment, and that the belief in the tradition of egalitarianism, which is now regarded as a myth, can still influence perception and policy. It has also been argued that the neo-liberal reforms of the public services since the 1980s have narrowed teachers' work, led to a focus on its measurable aspects and led to less time being available for other areas of work, including supporting non-academic learning and attainment.

In this thesis I discuss how the influence of the 'myth', a tradition of meritocracy, and a performativity focus on attainment, shape teachers understandings and practices as they are required to reconcile them with a concurrent policy agenda which has a focus on social inclusion and equity of educational opportunity.

To enable the voices of pupils and their teachers to be heard, I use semi-structured interviews and an interpretivist approach to study the experiences and attitudes of 8 teachers and 17 pupils in 2 comprehensive schools in a Scottish local authority. Through doing this I identify factors which might prevent teachers from developing inclusive approaches and support for learning practices which are helpful and acceptable to pupils. I also consider any apparent tensions between a person-centred inclusive policy agenda and a tradition of meritocracy. I found that pupils were generally positive about their experience of learning and identified practices they thought would be both helpful and acceptable to them: peer working; teachers mediating learning through discussion/questioning; work which was interesting to them and/or relevant to life beyond school. There was also a degree of consensus that difficulties associated with the reading/writing tasks they were required to do could be barriers to fully accessing the curriculum. The study also found that the teachers interviewed showed a commitment to provide support to pupils with additional support needs and that they provided a range of in-class arrangements to achieve this. However, they seemed also to be influenced by academic traditions/assumptions and felt that what they were able to do was limited by the agenda created by national examination requirements and it was that which drove the curriculum.

The study concludes that the practices and power relations in schools are influenced by the conservative thinking which characterises Scottish education, that these practices and power relations can be oppressive and disempowering to teachers and pupils and that pupils are still labelled, sometimes segregated and treated differently from their peers. It also emerged that while there are no real opportunities for pupils to express their views and challenge the identities ascribed to them, when they are given that opportunity they can have well formed views about their education and what changes to existing practice would better help them to improve their attainment and develop useful skills. Not all of the pupils did express such views, and this may link to effect of the power relations in schools. Of those who did express views about what they would like to see change, the changes they identified seem to be generally possible within the pedagogical and curriculum framework changes as suggested in Curriculum for Excellence documents. However, given the findings of this study about power relations and the persistence of academic traditions and assumptions, it is relevant to note that these changes in themselves will require alterations to existing in-school power relations, working arrangements and conceptualisations of what constitutes educational success and how it is measured.

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Introduction

0.1 Support for learning and social justice issues

This thesis is about those pupils considered to have learning difficulties (in Scotland since the Education (Additional Support for Learning) Act (Scotland) (2004) termed ‘additional support needs’) and who have been identified by in-school processes as requiring some form of additional support to enable them to learn. More specifically, it is about how the perceptions and experiences of those pupils could inform decisions taken by professionals about arrangements for providing appropriate and effective support for their learning, in mainstream settings, and be used to ensure social justice for them if and where it does not exist. In my understanding of what is meant by social justice I am influenced by Young’s (1990) definition of it as:

“the institutionalised conditions that make it possible for all to learn and use satisfying skills in socially recognised settings, to participate in decision making, and to express their feelings, experience and perspective on social life in contexts where others can listen.”
(ibid, p91)

It seems that currently the views and understandings of pupils are often missing from the decisions about the practices in place for their learning. The main focus of my research is the pupils and I set out in this work to hear their views so that I can better understand their experience of the support provided for them in school. However, as teachers are key actors in the contexts and processes around those pupils, I also explore the main influences on their practice and how these influences manifest themselves in their attitudes and pedagogic choices in relation to these pupils.

I believe that education can contribute to social justice by extending the opportunities available to young people in a variety of ways. It can help to ensure that young people are prepared to participate in society and, while acquiring formal qualifications which lead to employment may be part of that, education can also develop a young person’s capacity to make best use of their skills and talents beyond school, it can help to promote and support critical or enquiring attitudes or it can

offer access to new experiences. That education can offer such benefits for young people motivates many teachers to join the profession (OECD, 2005). However in recent years pressure for education to contribute to the economic progress of the nation and to shape individuals to serve that purpose has increased (Hill, 1993; McVicar, 1996). There is a thread of research and scholarly enquiry which suggests that the educational aims of improving social justice while focussing on the needs of the national economy cannot be easily reconciled (Gewirtz, 2002; Bottery, 2006; OECD 2005). Furthermore there is a body of research that suggests that education-or rather schooling is, in reality, reproducing social inequalities rather than challenging them (Apple, 1982; Bourdieu, 1989; Tomlinson, 1982). In this thesis I explore the dilemmas this tension between social justice agendas and economic pressures may create for teachers, with specific attention to the learning experiences of those who may not be conventional achievers.

0.2 Dilemmas for teachers

As part of the agenda of the Labour governments led by Harold Wilson from 1964 to 1970, which sought to create a modern, classless Britain, there were a range of progressive reforms and developments. That period has been acknowledged as a time of growing consumerism, counter-culture movements, low unemployment, and changes to the social order (Sandbrook, 2000). In consequence there was optimism about social progress and the period saw a developing liberal view of education based on, child-centredness (McPherson, 1993). By the 1980s there was a reaction against such developments and Conservative governments, in response to the need to ensure economic competitiveness in a global economy, re-established a focus on academic curricula and measurable performance. This led to a repositioning of knowledge as the fundamental resource in wealth creation (Doherty and McMahon, 2007) and teachers found themselves under contradictory pressures about what the purpose of education should be. As teachers became increasingly subject to centralist controls their capacity to make choices about what or how to teach was restricted (Bottery, 1998). In this context, the provision of support for those learners identified as having additional support needs provides a productive space to look more closely at the dilemmas faced by teachers, and the difficulties faced by pupils. The issue is a

productive one because it raises questions about teacher priorities where there is a demand for improved performance, while at the same time it connects directly to questions of fairness and equality of opportunity. I discuss this further in Chapter 1, but briefly review the issue here.

Teachers are expected, through the provision of learning support, to ensure better outcomes for pupils with additional needs while also raising attainment for all and ensuring fair and equitable treatment for all. Potential tensions and difficulties arise from these simultaneous requirements. Given the pressures of the competing agendas of social justice and improved academic performance (Allan, 2008), it may be that teachers opt out of the wider social justice issues and transfer the responsibility for meeting the needs of pupils with additional support needs to designated support staff. This research explores if this is, in fact, what happens, and does this through enquiring into the possible dilemmas caused by the provision of support for learning with attention to the context in which teachers work and with a parallel focus on what the pupils themselves experience and want.

My reasons for selecting this topic for further research stem from my professional formation and identity, firstly as a teacher and currently as a local authority education officer. In these roles I developed, and have maintained, a commitment to monitoring and improving my practice by reflecting on it systematically and from a research-informed perspective (Schon, 1983). As a teacher I was, and as a local authority education officer I continue to be, part of a community of practice in which government decisions are contested, negotiated, mediated and implemented. It has been, and continues to be, my hope that I can better understand and thus improve arrangements for pupils labelled as having additional support needs.

0.3 Methodology

I adopt a critical theory standpoint in this research, through which I acknowledge the relationship between dominant policy narratives and professional practice and the social and political contexts in which they occur and I explore this in Chapter 2. However, I also acknowledge the capacity for challenging or changing that relationship by those involved in them, and it is my intention to engage with the issues identified in a way which is consistent with contributing to the development of improved social justice by discussing ways in which taken-for-granted and dominant assumptions can produce and sustain injustice. I do this so that such assumptions and their effects can be better understood and to open up the possibility that they can be challenged and changed.

The standpoint I adopt is not value free but reflects my own views and experiences as a working class female who gained access to university education and a career. I was influenced by the politics of the 60s and 70s which advocated changes to the established order to achieve improved social justice for marginalised or disadvantaged groups. Such views are also linked to my methodological choice of listening to, and including, the voices of pupils and teachers in research about them. So that others can understand my interpretations of events/circumstances I need to be explicit about any “personal baggage” (Ozga, 2000) in terms of my beliefs and the contexts which informed them. Seddon (1996a) observes that such “baggage” is formed by the personal circumstances which affect a researcher’s understandings and the use of the theories and tools of research processes, and also by what she calls the “collective biography” of other research in the same field:

“the appropriation of intellectual resources by researchers is idiosyncratic ... (and)also shaped by disciplinary formation, prevailing research metaphors and the collective biography of particular research communities.” (ibid, p201)

I discuss issues of methodology in more detail in Chapter 3 but I set out below the details of my personal context. I then explain more fully the topic of my research,

why I chose to study this particular aspect of educational practice and why I made my methodological choices.

0.4 Personal context

When I became a teacher, in 1979, my view of politics and society was informed by the socio-political changes and challenges to the socio-political order that emerged in the late 60s and early 70s. I was influenced by the optimistic mood of the times which seemed to be validated by my own experience of success within the Scottish education system and the career opportunities which became available to me as a result of that. I understand now that my experiences as a pupil which led me to achieve as I did and to develop a positive view of learning in the well-resourced, newly built school I attended were made possible by the implementation of innovative approaches to teaching and learning which were increasingly encouraged at the time (Scotland, 1969) and, that in my education and career prospects, I benefited from the expansion of educational provision and changing patterns of employment for women (with more women moving into the service sector, including teaching) which had begun in the post war period (Devine and Finlay 1996).

My education and employment evidenced for me how access to education could increase life choices. My secondary school experience built on the positive view of education I had developed in my primary years. I attended a six-year, neighbourhood comprehensive in a semi-rural location: the goal of the then Labour government, if not the reality everywhere in Scotland. By the time I left school, I had benefited from thirteen years of free education where I had experienced success, had entrance qualifications for university and was able to consider a career choice which would give me social mobility. I know now that I was fortunate to be a member of two of the groups that most benefited from the local comprehensive schools of the time: girls and the working class (McPherson, 1993).

My personal experience of the state-funded education system was that it could work well to provide a successful educational experience and contribute to a changing

social order by extending equality of opportunity. When I entered the teaching profession in 1979, I was also influenced by a widely accepted view at the time, now acknowledged as being somewhat exaggerated and sentimentalised (McPherson, *ibid.*), that education in Scotland was egalitarian and considered of paramount importance in every community. When I became a secondary teacher in 1979, I had faith in, and enthusiasm for, the trend towards child-centredness in education to promote personal development and I welcomed the related changes in the secondary system. These included practical subjects replacing the traditional classical subjects as it was also acknowledged that changes to the curriculum and its delivery were required so that it did not create barriers to learning but would be accessible to all (Scotland, 1969; HMI, 1978; Warnock, 1978). Shortly after I began my teaching career the Munn and Dunning reforms (SED, 1977a; SED, 1977b) established the requirement for appropriate courses and assessments to meet the needs of all pupils in all secondary schools. At that time it seemed to me that the egalitarian principles I believed in, and the acceptance of the need for curricular change and child-centred, flexible, responsive teaching, were established as part of the ethos of Scottish secondary education.

Ball and Goodson (1985) draw attention to the interaction between teachers' lives and careers and the political priorities and social assumptions of the times they teach in. As I have set out above, my biography engendered in me a strong, personal commitment to education and a belief in its capacity to contribute to a changing social order and the development of a more egalitarian society. However, thirty years on, with the benefit of hindsight and wider reading and research, it is possible to see how the intervening social and political circumstances have meant that much of the optimism of the sixties has not been fulfilled. The intervening years have brought fundamental changes to society in general, and to the way in which education is perceived and organised. Progressive agendas for social change initially led to greater equality in terms of gender, race, disability, and there has been a widening access to education. More recent times have seen a shift in emphasis away from equality and access and towards on competition, performance and individualism (Newman, 2001). Of specific relevance to the group of pupils who are the subject of

this thesis, despite the changes in society which have taken place and notable progress having been made in improving the achievement of children living in poverty (OECD, 2007, p14), the report also identified a continuing tendency in Scotland for children from poorer homes or low socio-economic background to underachieve at school, study at lower academic levels and record lower pass rates than their peers. Of relevance to this thesis it found that individual schools make little difference and that it is still the case that “who you are in Scotland is far more important than the school you attend” (ibid, p15). It seems, therefore, that schools can and should do more to ensure social justice for pupils and it is my concern about the absence of social justice for pupils with additional support needs which drives this thesis.

0.5 Choosing the research topic

My interest in researching the particular area of enquiry of this thesis has its beginnings in observations gained from my twenty four years as a teacher in Scottish, local authority, mainstream comprehensive schools. This experience included twelve years specifically in the role of Principal Teacher of Support for Learning, in a school in an area where there was a significant level of social deprivation and poor academic attainment. My support for learning role involved me directly in planning and providing learning support for pupils identified as having additional support needs. I observed that many pupils identified by their teachers as requiring learning support interventions to enable them to achieve academic success did not always agree with the assumptions made about their need for extra support in class, nor were they always prepared to comply with the support arrangements provided for them. Such pupils tended not to do well in classwork or assessments, and often also became uninterested in and disengaged from, school in general. These observations suggested to me that not enough was being done to enable the pupils to gain the same benefits from education as their peers were being offered. I believed this to be inequitable and sought to understand its causes so that I might be more effective in addressing them.

Reading of the academic literature suggested that my observations about pupils' perceptions and attitudes were consistent with that literature (see, for example Riddell, Brown and Duffield, 1994; Munn, 1994; Allan, 1999). Other authors (Tilstone, Florian and Rose, 1998; Avramidis and Norwich, 2002; Alldred, 1998) suggested that further research was required to identify which practices and procedures might best support the development of effective learning environments for pupils with additional support needs in mainstream classes. The areas suggested for further research were:

- identifying factors which might prevent teachers from engaging in reflective practice in respect of inclusive approaches for pupils with additional support needs
- identifying support for learning practices which are acceptable to pupils
- developing forms of pupil participation in research in ways which enable voice and agency to be authentically expressed.

In my previous post, as a secondary school SFL teacher, I had hoped to carry out some small scale research into these three areas. However, after I left teaching in 2003, it became more difficult for me to have access to pupils. Moreover the first two suggested areas for further research identified above were of greater direct relevance to my new post, and therefore it was easier for me to obtain permission to carry out the research. Also, they were areas I believed I would continue to be able to influence to develop better outcomes for pupils, so I chose to focus on them.

The research for this thesis focuses on the perceptions of a small group of pupils who are considered to have additional support needs, in two secondary schools, about how helpful and acceptable they find the support interventions in place for them. I do this because I want to better understand how practices in relation to pupils with additional support needs can be better organised to support effective learning and social justice. As stated previously, as teachers are also key actors in the contexts and processes around these pupils, I also want to find out about the pedagogic choices they make in relation to such pupils and so obtaining the views of a small group of

teachers, across a range of subjects is also part of the research. The research questions this study addresses are:

1. What are the perceptions of pupils identified as having additional support needs about what their support needs are and how do they think they could best be met within classroom contexts?
2. What are teachers' perceptions of how pupils identified as having additional support needs can have their needs met in classroom contexts?
3. What implications are there for future practice produced by the contributions from pupils and their teachers in relation to the above?

0.6 Issues of gender and power

It is my intention to seek the views of teachers and pupils, however I also seek to ensure that in gaining their views and interpreting them I am not speaking 'for' them. I seek to make spaces for them speak for themselves (Skeggs, 1995). I want to obtain, from the pupils, their perception of their experience so that those perceptions could be used to improve existing arrangements. With this in mind, I use methods of data collection which are intended to allow the pupils and their teachers to express their views freely.

As I have stated, in my experience being female was not a barrier to achievement and my self-affirming, successful experience, combined with the advancement of women's rights from the 1960s onwards (hooks, 2000), led me to expect that I would not be discriminated against in the workplace because of my gender. However, in drawing on feminist literature to analyse instances of conflict where, in my previous post as a support for learning teacher, I had encountered apparent unwillingness in others to accept my suggestions for changes to practice relating to teaching pupils with additional support needs, I have concluded retrospectively that gender related

issues may have been at play. This, and how it affected my orientation to this research, is briefly summarised below.

The organisational culture of the school where I worked was based on a traditional model of school management where overall power and control was expressed and enacted through the individual actions of a controlling authority figure (the headteacher), and the organisational structures in place (e.g. deputy and assistant head teachers, principal teachers, whole school planning and target setting, subject based timetables, whole school policies and rules) perpetuated systems of order and predictability. Paechter (2000) notes that such orthodox systems of power and control reflect a masculine viewpoint which privileges objectivity over subjectivity. The female perspective, which places greater emphasis on subjective areas, such as human interconnectedness (Gilligan, 1982), and can speak of issues related to caring for marginalised groups, can itself be marginalised within the orthodox, masculine, managerialist culture. Although I was a principal teacher, I was working within a hierarchical, authoritative culture, and as I was speaking with a voice which was seeking to express a counter viewpoint which questions the existing systems and organisation, and on behalf of pupils who had additional support needs who perhaps not seen as significant by those in power, my own position was one of low power. Also, in seeking to change the status quo, I was challenging the existing hegemony from a perspective, which I have come to understand is not shared by everyone, that the views of those other than those in positions of power should be included and heard (Kristeva, 1981; hooks, 2000).

Arriving at such an understanding has given me insight into how others may also experience their work in relation to working with pupils with additional support needs where structures and power relationships in schools may make it difficult to advance any views which contradict the status quo. Also, I recognise that my position now, as a representative of the local authority, may be perceived, by the teachers and pupils I speak to, as one which is privileged within a traditional model of a top-down power hierarchy and therefore I must be reflexive and attentive to how such power relations affect the research process. It is my intention to make it possible

for the voices of those who may previously have been silenced to be heard (Gitlin and Russell, 1994) but it needs to be acknowledged that it may be the case that the teachers and pupils may feel they are part of, or are speaking on behalf of, a low status, marginalised group and that no-one in power is listening, or that no-one in power can be told what they feel and experience.

0.7 Thesis structure

The overall structure of the thesis is that in Chapter 1 I consider how the changing policy contexts since the 1980s have shaped and influenced the work of teachers and how that affects the learning of pupils who have additional support needs. To further contextualise the arrangements which are now in place for such pupils in Chapter 2 I engage with the different conceptualisation of learning difficulties which have moved, over time, from practices of separation to inclusion. I also consider in Chapter 2 how these changing conceptualisations have influenced teachers' understandings and their practice and I take into account issues of power relations and social justice. In Chapters 3 and 4 I set out how I collected their views, what influenced my methodological choice, how I analysed the data and what the analysis found. I set out what has influenced my choice of research topic, the methods I chose to use to carry out the research, why I chose to use these particular methods and also, what were their strengths and weaknesses. In Chapter 5 I conclude this thesis by considering the findings of the research and what they suggest are implications for future practice in schools and for any further research.

Chapter 1 The political context of education

1.1 Introduction

In the introductory section I set out the main focus of my enquiry and the purposes behind it. In this chapter I look at how the policy context affects the key subjects of my study, pupils and their teachers. I do this because, as the purpose of my study is to identify possibilities to improve the learning arrangements for a particular group of pupils, I need to find out what circumstances may exist to prevent this group of pupils from receiving effective and appropriate support. As teachers are key actors in the teaching and learning process, I need also to review how the policy context influences and shapes their assumptions and practices.

I begin by considering how the international and national socio-economic factors have influenced the policy of British governments from 1970s to the present. I then consider how educational provision was affected by the neo-liberal reforms over that period which resulted in the application of market principles to public services. There are different governance arrangements in England and in Scotland and they therefore present two different policy contexts which are productive areas of study. I look at how international and UK policies are received and enacted in both countries and how the resulting policy arrangements shape the work of teachers and how this affects the teaching of pupils with additional support needs. I conclude this chapter with a summary which acknowledges the tensions created by the policy and practice arrangements under which teachers work.

1.2 Socio-economic background

In post-war Britain the government of education came to be formed by a broad consensus with cross party agreement about economic and social arrangements, organised through the post-war welfare state. This broad agreement held throughout the 50s and 60s and was characterised by a mixed economy (with state managed markets to achieve social goals), a commitment to full employment, and state

controlled welfare provision to achieve social equity (Kavanagh, 1987). By the early 70s governments in Britain and in other western economies increasingly questioned the view that such arrangements could deliver economic growth and social equity:

“economic recession and slow economic growth undermined popular support for the welfare state consensus” (ibid, p9).

Pierson (1988) identifies the early/mid 70s as the end of the political consensus in favour of a managed economy and state welfare. Such changes in thinking in the political sphere occurred at the same time as changes in the public perception of how social needs should be met:

“from support for collective solutions to problems of social need to a preference for market provision to satisfy individual welfare demands.” (ibid, p150)

As part of a general questioning of the arrangements on which the welfare state was based, the role and purpose of education also became subject to challenge.

The breakdown of the post-war consensus has been attributed to a range of factors including, a downturn in the British economy which, as it had grown more slowly than that of other developed countries was more vulnerable to the global economic decline of that period (Marquand, 1987), left wing criticisms that it served the needs of the capitalist economic system (McVicar, 1996), and right wing criticisms of the power of the service providers at the expense of service users (McVicar, 1996). Bureaucratic administration and professionalism were both involved in controlling service delivery in the welfare state (Clark and Newman; 1997) and both were accused of serving their own interests by critics of welfare state provision. In the context of education, there had been a tri-partite working arrangement involving central government, education authorities and teachers (represented by the main trade unions). Education professionals were employed, at local authority level, to advise and support teachers in schools (McVicar, 1996) while, at school level, teachers operated as relatively autonomous professionals (Fergusson, 1994). The 1960s are regarded as being the high point of professional autonomy for teachers (Hoyle and

John, 1995), but growing dissatisfaction with the post-war consensus led to role of the professionals in education being challenged as their rights to occupy positions of such power and autonomy was examined in the context of an emerging political agenda of the empowerment of citizens (including freedom of choice in education) and free markets in place of state managed markets (Bottery, 1998). The Labour Prime Minister, James Callaghan, made a speech at Ruskin College in 1976 in which he blamed teachers for practices which had led to a lowering of standards, maintained the need for education to be more relevant to the needs of industry and suggested that there should be a core curriculum to ensure a level of basic skills for pupils (Hill, 1993). This was a turning point in the relationship between teachers and the state (Hoyle and John, 1995).

The traditional view of teachers as professionals who were regarded as ‘experts’ within a particular field of knowledge, working independently and autonomously was further challenged by the introduction of market driven principles to education in the 1980s, under Conservative UK governments. These principles shifted the balance of power to managers, who were attentive to consumer’s wishes in making decisions about service delivery (Bottery, 1998). The conception of teachers work changed from “*high trust, peer based accountability, mystique and autonomy*” to “*low trustextensive quantitative accountability and....only limited discretion*” (Bottery, 2006, p107). Teachers have become increasingly accountable, and were and are expected to work as part of a team which includes other professions. They are expected to provide the best possible learning conditions for pupils, working towards broad social goals and where the curriculum requires personalised learning, to foster skills for life rather than just subject knowledge, and where pupils are expected to have ownership of, and control over, their own learning (OECD, 2005). Such a sea of change has led to teachers having to engage with a wider social agenda but also with a renewed focus on academic rigour, and this raises questions about how they have reacted to and managed the changes required of them.

The role of teachers and the purpose of education have been repositioned as a result of the political policy shift of that period and this has changed the professional identities and working lives of teachers as they have had to accommodate changes in thinking and integrate them into their practice as new key priorities have emerged for education:

- raising attainment for all while also focusing on the lowest attaining 20% (Missing Out, HMIE, 2006)
- quality assurance / accountability (Standards in Scotland's Schools (etc) Act (2000))
- social inclusion and the development of integrated children's services which has required that teachers engage in interagency working (For Scotland's Children, SEED 2001)
- curriculum changes required by new examination and assessment structures: Standard Grades, 5-14, National Tests, Higher Still, Curriculum For Excellence (Educating for Excellence, SEED, 2003; Learning and Teaching Scotland)

In order to identify and understand the effects of such large-scale changes to the way education is conceptualised and managed I begin by drawing on academic literature to identify the broad general trend; consider how they have shaped policy and education systems; and how such policies, and the conditions that they create, shape the arrangements under which teachers and their pupils live and work.

1.3 Neo-liberalism: the development of new public management

During the 1980s and 1990s, as part of the response to global recession and diminished growth in Western economies, neo-liberal trends in politics led to a questioning of the acceptance of the interventionist role of the state. Where before there had been general acceptance that the welfare state was the embodiment of public interest, it became to be viewed as economically unproductive and a constraining force on the economy (Clark, Gewirtz and McLaughlin, 2000). Such a change in political perspective has had lasting effect on the way educational provision is conceptualised and organised in that there emerged cross party acceptance that service provision, previously in the form of provider-led state controlled bureaucracies, should be opened up to market forces through competition and the involvement of private and voluntary providers. This led to the reconstruction of public services. The state bureaucracy was replaced with managerial tools imported from the private sector, and the twin goals of empowering citizens and creating greater consumer choice were to be achieved through the deconstruction of state monopolies (Power, 1997; Shaw and Martin, 2000).

Such deconstruction of centrally controlled, provider-led systems and their replacement by systems which supported consumer-led choice challenged the autonomy of the professionals by requiring accountability to customers where previously they had freedom to decide what was taught and how (Bottery, 1998). The emergence of a new style of management, referred to as New Public Management (NPM), not only led to changes in the practices of state run services, but introduced a set of ideologies which established a political and moral framework on which claims were based on how public services should be conceptualised and organised (Clark and Newman, 1997).

This thesis does not set out to consider the arguments as to whether or not the anti-welfarist agenda which introduced free market policies and business-like models of service provision (Clark, Gewirtz and McLaughlin, 2000) was an appropriate ideological framework for the way public services were conceived and delivered in

general, but will consider how the effects of such policies, in the context of education provision, have impacted on the work of teachers. Specific reference will be made to the tensions created by increased external accountability mechanisms where there are also expectations that education becomes more inclusive and teachers are required to respond to the needs of every individual. To contextualise this area of enquiry I examine the political circumstances and main drivers impacting on education policy from 1979 onwards, at national level, and then with reference to the different ways in which the new policy agenda has been enacted in England and Scotland.

1.4 Main political drivers

From the post-war years until the 1980s the educational provision within the welfare state had been based on partnership between government, local authorities and teachers (Hill, 1993; McVicar, 1996). Education became the site of increasing ideological conflict with its efficacy challenged by left and right wing political groupings. Callaghan's Ruskin College speech which argued that education standards could, and should, be improved was a departure from convention at the time, as there was consensus that matters relating to the curriculum were controlled by professionals in the education community (Ranson, 2003). In his speech Callaghan identified specific areas of concern: informal teaching methods, the need for a core curriculum, the benefits of a national inspectorate, and the need for education to be responsive to national economic needs.

The speech provoked much debate and it marked the beginning of the challenge to the professional authority of teachers to determine what went on in schools. By 1979, the neo-liberalist policies driven by the incoming Conservative government espoused the view that when market forces were applied to education and the public (the consumers) were given choice, this would drive up standards and that the setting of pre-specified performance targets for schools would enable the consumer to know if they were satisfied with the end product (Ranson, 2003). Such changes to education were part wide-scale reform to the management practices in public services of the Conservative governments of 1979 -1997 and were based on a perceived crisis, as identified by politicians and driven by the anti-statist, anti-welfare views of the New

Right (wing) political ideologies. These ideologies asserted that the international economic climate and changing demographics dictated that reduced welfare expenditure was imperative (Clark, Gewirtz and McLaughlin, 2000). These international perspectives informed the policies which led to the remaking of the welfare state in Britain and asserted that the post-industrial, knowledge-based, global economies posed problems which could not be solved by existing economic philosophies. It was argued that the answer was to have governance which enabled resources to be managed in a way as to constantly maximise efficiency and effectiveness (Osbourne & Gaebler, 1992).

Previously, government controlled bureaucratic administration of welfare systems had been established to ensure that there was stability and predictability through state controlled allocation of resources and that impartial, equitable distribution of them was assured through processes and regulations, a system referred to as ‘welfarism’ (Clark and Newman, 1997). However, from the mid nineteen seventies, both global recession and the weakness of the British economy led to revisions of political and economic ideologies and, subsequently, in welfare systems, a move from growth to restraint. The legitimising narratives were also being increasingly challenged by expressions of divergent needs (e.g. multi-ethnic populations; changes in the expectations that social and familial roles would be wholly dictated by gender; challenges to the assumption about the nuclear family as the focal point of social organisation). Welfarism had failed to achieve equitable distribution of resources and this had led to the emergence of disaffected groups of working class and black young people (Gewirtz, 1997). Challenges to the manifestations of the power of the welfare state involved arguments about equity of access, level of benefits and services available, and the conditions under which services were provided and administered. The political project of the New Right, as expressed through the Conservative Government elected in 1979, articulated the belief that existing bureaucracies were inefficient, that new management practices would ensure value for money, and promised service users accountability and responsiveness.

The ideology of NPM asserted economic individualism, the revitalisation of traditional moral and social authority, and the supremacy of markets as mechanisms of social distribution rather than the state as a mechanism of allocation of resources. Market discourses became dominant and the Conservative Governments from 1979 onwards began a programme of reconstruction of the public services which involved the re-structuring of local authority systems, tight financial controls and challenges to the role of professionals within the systems (Clark, Gewirtz and Mc Laughlin, 2000). Against a background of complex global political and social change:

“the bureau-professional regime of the old welfare institutions emerged as the major battle ground for the new welfare order”
(Clarke and Newman, 1997, p13).

This meant that, in the public sector, as with the private sector, organisations were required to become more ‘business like’ (as per the NPM model), and good financial housekeeping, through tighter controls and increased productivity, was paramount. This was to be achieved through managers who were free to manage without the constraints of the state controls which had developed from post-war economic and political conditions. The changes this was to deliver are summarised

- from provider dominated to *user dominated*
- from monopolistic to *market driven*
- from compulsion to *choice*
- from uniformity to *diversity*
- from a culture of dependency to a culture of *self-reliance*.

(ibid, p49)

Expectations that organisations should be publicly accountable, and provide value for money, dominated and replaced the previously held acceptance of the post-war decades of a managed economy and the bureaucratic, controlling role of state organisations (such as health or education). The growth of a new style of management associated with this emphasised cost control, financial transparency, decentralised authority and market force mechanisms. Power (1997) notes that such

public accountability created the need for audit mechanisms to enable consumers (the taxpayers) to find out if their money was being spent economically, efficiently, and effectively (the 3Es) and that these mechanisms enabled government to steer and control in an indirect way.

1.5 New Labour, NPM and education

After the election of a Labour Government to Westminster in 1997, there seemed to be suggestions of some to change to the prevailing ideology. Education, however, was still very much on the political agenda. In his Ruskin College speech in 1996, as Leader of the Opposition and twenty years on from James Callaghan's watershed speech, Tony Blair made reference to his vision of continuing to drive up standards in education under a Labour administration:

“our ambition is to ensure that....every school is either excellent or improving or both” (Blair, 1996)

Within a complex global economy, to ensure economic competitiveness human capital came to be viewed as a key resource in wealth production. Education came to be regarded as key in developing human capital and nation states became concerned with international comparisons of educational attainment (Doherty and McMahon, 2007). Education was identified as a priority for the Labour government (now famously, at the Labour Party conference in 1996) “education, education, education”. Such a commitment to use education to create economic efficiency and social cohesion required that schooling developed particular attributes/skills in individuals so that they could become individually responsible citizens who could, and would, contribute to the economy. To ensure that the ‘economising’ of education in this way worked to achieve the political and economic goals set, regulation of what was done in schools, by teachers, was required. Gewirtz (2002) notes that the views of Michael Barber (1996) were to be vastly influential in New Labour's thinking in this policy area, leading to the idea that poor teaching (and thus teachers) should be the focus of reform and that there would be direct government intervention in pedagogy

(such as was seen in the imposition of the Literacy and Numeracy Hours (Arnott and Menter (2007)).

Labour policy statements emphasised the importance of combining economic dynamism with social justice and declared intentions to move away from being concerned with short-term efficiency to focus on long-term effectiveness (Newman, 2000). They also sought to modernise education along inclusive, consultative lines, while the centralist controls established by the introduction of NPM remained (Fergusson, 2000). After 1997 very little relating to the governance of education changed (Smithers, 2001) and the political aspect of managerialism, shifting power from the professionals, enlarging the scope and power of managers and allowing for political control from a distance was still evident. Such arrangements create a particular type of power relations – of panoptic vision and where the systems ensure compliance with centrally set agenda (Dale 1999).

Since the 1930s the governance of education in Scotland had been under the control of the Scottish Office. When moved to Edinburgh in 1939, those involved had a degree of autonomy and policy reflected distinctive features of Scottish culture (Paterson, 1994). Although Scotland was then still under the governance of the parliament at Westminster there were differences in the way policy agendas were received and enacted in the two countries. England provides an example of an extreme version of changes to practice as a consequence of the policy shifts of the 1980s (Seddon, 1996b). Arnott and Menter (2007, p254) maintain that the creation of systems which enabled education and the work of teachers to be centrally steered and regulated has gone further in England than elsewhere in the UK is because of a cultural positioning in England which includes “*a tradition of anti-intellectualism and a historical resistance to public education*”. This has made England more receptive to the arguments against the role of education as key in advancing social improvement and accepting of measures which restrict the power of both public (local authority) bureaucratic control and the role of the professionals.

Key elements of NPM which were introduced into the English education system from 1979 to 1997 were: the abolition of negotiating rights and the imposition of teaching contracts; a national curriculum; national testing; local management of schools; a new inspection regime; legislation to increase both diversity of provision and parental choice; centrally determined criteria for teacher training, and the setting and publishing of examination and test targets (Gewirtz, 2002). After the election of a Labour Government in 1997 there was a further focus on prescriptive programmes such as Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, increased emphasis on choice, diversity and specialisation of schools, and increased emphasis on inclusion projects (Arnott and Menter (2007). The systems of audit and monitoring which were put in place as noted by Dale (1999) created conditions which gave little opportunity for teachers to do anything other than follow the agenda and practices set by government.

Supporters of New Right principles had portrayed the swing in ideological position and the introduction of such reforms as part of the programme of providing consumer-led choice and diversity. Supporters of the principles of markets and choice in education, such as Chubb and Moe (1990) in Gewirtz (2002, p5), had argued that the removal of bureaucratic systems of control was the key to effective education as it led to:

*“ unleashing the productive potential (of teachers)...
.....(and) granting them the autonomy to do what
they do best” (ibid, p187).*

There is evidence which suggests that these reforms did not unleash the productive potential of teachers or give them autonomy through freedom from restrictive control, as Chubb and Moe had suggested, rather the regimes put in place as part of the NPM reforms both restricted teachers' practice and limited their autonomy. Menter, Mahoney and Hextall (2004, p196) note that serving the economy has become a main function of education:

*“the definition of education policy as an element of
economic policy has been reiterated time and again”.*

There is a view, as expressed by Bottery (1998) and Power (1997), that the systems which have been developed to ensure that this function of education is performing well, that is, those systems which measure education's economic efficiency (e.g. audit, quality assurance through setting/meeting of targets), are actually at odds with the process of education which is person-centred and concerned with qualitative values. There is also a strong thread of academic thought that education should be about broad personal and social goals to encourage individuals to go on learning, such as put forward by Dewey (1916) to develop skills useful to them as people and as citizens and, as argued by Bottery (2006) to be a project to build a better society. Such broader personal and social goals cannot easily be planned and translated into observable behaviours which can be audited against targets. It is also possible that consequences of expressing desired outcomes as auditable targets could be to limit teaching to only that which the targets refer to, and that any other processes that do take place are not taken into account (Paterson, 1995).

There are other factors which would seem likely to discourage the unleashing of productive potential of teachers. Ball (1990) in Arnott and Menter (2007, p 254) draws to our attention that reforms introduced to education were accompanied by what he called a 'discourse of derision' which included the questioning of teachers' work, where local authorities and teachers were being blamed for high public spending and teachers' professionalism and competency was called into question. This made it difficult for teachers to be in a position to challenge the reforms which were framed in the political discourse as being beneficial to the service users (that is, pupils and parents) and as being a requirement for the social and economic well-being of the nation. Teachers' professionalism and competency was called into question. Fergusson (1998) in Gewirtz (2002, p5) also notes that in teacher training, theory was replaced by more instrumental forms of staff development. There is evidence which suggests that regimes of increased performativity did not achieve the goals of increasing teacher autonomy in a creative way, but narrowed their work and increased stress for them (Gewirtz, 2002; Ball 1999).

To consider whether or not national economic competitiveness is best achieved through NPM and the 3E's or by processes which focus on more long-term social goals is not the purpose of this thesis: however now, around thirty years after the 1979 watershed of the introduction of wide-ranging reform to the way public services are administered, it is possible to reflect on whether or not the caveats that short-term output-focused evaluation in respect of education would not improve its delivery and achieve the social goals set were indeed correct. I will now consider what evidence suggests about how the economising of education and evaluation of education through the collection of quantitative data and target-setting impacted on what and how teachers teach.

1.6 NPM and its influence on teaching

Although the Labour government elected in 1997 had stated a greater concern with social justice in education than the short-term efficiency driven policies of the previous Conservative governments, the centralist control, and the focus on defining standards as a means to raise them continued Wrigley (2003). Despite arguments that quantitative measurement does not capture value based concepts which are important in education, the collection of such data persists and teachers have been increasingly regulated and subjected to surveillance and teaching goals created by externally set targets. The flexibility, autonomy and trust afforded to teachers pre 1979 has gone, to be replaced with low trust, high accountability, and with limited opportunity to exercise professional judgement (Bottery, 2006). The culture and goals of marketisation were different from the welfarist culture and goals of equity of provision for all which had been widely accepted in education since the post-war era. From the 80s onwards, schools and teachers were required to provide evidence of performing well and raising attainment. It would seem reasonable to conclude, as has been suggested, that this might lead teachers to focus on those areas of performance which can be measured. This raises an issue that such circumstances would tend to favour those pupils who can achieve good educational outcomes in the measured/audited areas and so, could also have the potential to create circumstances less favourable for those who may not easily do well in these areas,

such as pupils with additional support needs. To find out if that is indeed the case, I look in more detail at how the low-trust, high accountability culture has impacted on working arrangements for teachers and their pupils. I begin by summarising the changes to the culture over the last 30 or so years, then I consider data relating to the teachers' perspective of how the changes to practice over the last thirty years have impacted on their practice and any implications that may have for teaching pupils with additional support needs.

For teachers who had been teaching since before the late 70s or early 80s aspects of their job changed. Pre 1979, welfarism had entailed a commitment to distributive justice, which has been replaced by a formal commitment to market forces and competition (Gewirtz, 1997). An effect of this is that schools and teachers now must conform to targets and produce results to attract resources, this leading to a focus on the product and not the process. It has been suggested that a focus on setting and achieving targets and central direction of teachers' work has separated the planning of work from carrying it out (Ball and Goodson, 1985), which can mean also that teachers become detached from the work they do as they are only required to manage strategic decisions about content rather than exercise judgement about how their practice is best used (Bottery, 2006).

It has been noted (OECD 2005a; Bottery 2006) that many teachers choose teaching as a profession for altruistic reasons and to help young people. Therefore, as teachers try to reconcile the demands of a results driven performativity culture in an area of work which was previously considered person-centred and where the actual process of interaction with pupils was considered important, they experience stress (Gewirtz, 2002; OECD, 2005; Bottery, 2006;). Research into this area by Gewirtz (2002) identified three aspects of teachers' working lives where difficulties were apparent as they tried to reconcile their professional identities and practices with the marketisation of education and the systems of performance measurements which it required. Although the research was carried out in three London schools, each with distinctive features, Gewirtz suggests that the insights developed have applicability beyond the schools themselves. The three overlapping areas of teachers' lives and

work where difficulties were identified were: social relations, emotional well-being, and pedagogy.

The study revealed that social relations were affected by pressure to concentrate on activities relating to measurable output as the time that teachers and managers had to devote to the formal business management (e.g. record keeping; planning to ensure curriculum coverage; evaluation and appraisal) limited the opportunities for informal meetings and so, the opportunities to learn from and/or support each other. Also, competition for limited resources encouraged Balkanisation (allegiance to subject department) (Hargreaves, 1994), which further restricted opportunities for developing social relationships through collaborative working.

The emotional well-being of teachers Gewirtz found to be affected by performativity systems where teachers are required to continually engage in producing evidence of their work to be evaluated by others (e.g. exam performance data; planning for, and producing data relating to, meeting targets). Teachers in her study spoke of feelings of 'loss of control' of what they did in that time spent on such tasks meant that there was less time to do what they called the 'real work' of interacting with pupils and being able to respond to their needs. Ball (1999) also notes how the pressures of increased performativity which can lead teachers to focus on aspects of their work which can be measured (e.g. tests or target setting) can also lead to an awareness that through the data generated, they too can be measured and evaluated as individuals and their worth (or not) to the institution determined.

In relation to pedagogy Gewirtz's study found evidence of managerialist practices in education narrowing the focus of teachers' work to become outcome driven and with the priority given to exam performance. This led to teachers adopting pedagogical approaches geared to support, narrow, academic conceptualisations of performance. As a consequence of this, teachers reported they were unable to focus on other aspects of education which they considered to be important, such as teaching which can respond flexibly to pursue areas of pupil interest or providing a curriculum to which pupils with diverse needs and backgrounds can relate to. Such narrowing of

teachers' work, as a consequence of external accountability, has been noted elsewhere. Ranson (2003) suggests that, by adapting practices which serve the arrangements of external accountability, teachers also perpetuate such arrangements and make it less likely to divert from such a way of working. Also, as Ozga (2000) states, in a culture where teachers are expected to teach to pre-determined performance criteria, rather than risk not achieving them, they may avoid any teaching and learning processes which may not produce what would be regarded as the 'right' outcomes and that:

“technical pedagogies limit capacity for autonomous judgement, emotional investment and moral purpose”
(ibid, 2000)

The evidence above also highlights aspects of practices introduced by managerialism which raise concerns in respect of pupils with additional support needs. Referring to the three areas of emerging conflict for teachers above, I will consider the extent to which the insights developed have applicability in the context of Scottish education.

In a climate of limited opportunity to develop social relationships with colleagues, teachers also have limited opportunity to discuss freely issues relating to their teaching. Where there is limited time for informal discussion, the possibility of obtaining advice from colleagues which might be of use is restricted. Teachers' concerns about such matters may remain private, a possible source of stress, and perhaps leaving teachers feeling unable to develop useful changes to their practice so that the needs of all learners can be met. Where teachers' well-being is compromised by stress arising from systems of performativity and surveillance which require that they are seen to 'do well', there may be a risk that they will be unable to devote time to those pupils who either are unlikely to do well in examinations or would require a lot of teacher time and support to do so. Teachers, feeling too pressurised to divert from teaching geared to produce examination attainment, was a strong feature of Gewirtz's study.

Teachers are thus perhaps unable to develop pedagogical approaches which take into account the needs of pupils who have difficulty making progress in an exam-

orientated system. This will surely impact on their learning and attainment of those pupils. Also, a pedagogy which is restricted because it requires to serve goals of external accountability, as noted by Ranson, (2003), makes it unlikely that teachers will develop a different way of working and this will preclude the development of a system of education which is concerned with issues of social justice. Social justice, as defined by Young (1990), requires that arrangements in schools make it possible for all pupils to be included in successful learning experiences. A system with a strong focus on external accountability measured through pre-determined outcomes and examination success is likely to inhibit this.

For the purposes of this study it is important to consider that where teachers have limited time and feel constrained to give priority to activities which will raise exam performance, that those pupils who have learning difficulties, who require a lot of teacher time and are unlikely to do well in exams may be adversely affected. Research into teachers' views in relation to working with pupils who have additional support needs, in mainstream settings, (Croll and Moses, 2000; Povey, Stephenson and Radice, 2001; Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden 2000) has found that, mainly, teachers say that they lack the time, skills or training to do so. This would seem to suggest that there is a possible dilemma for teachers who are required to provide evidence of successful teaching, evaluated through pupil attainment data, for all the pupils they teach, but pupils who have difficulties with learning may not be able to contribute to the data required without extra support. As the evidence suggests that teachers feel they do not have the skills or time to teach pupils with additional support needs, it can be speculated that they will be unable to provide the support required improve the pupils' abilities to achieve success in examinations or tests. Ainscow (1997) maintains that developing practices which are inclusive (of pupils with additional support needs) requires an atmosphere that encourages teachers to reflect on what they do and experiment with it. It was noted above that the regimes of performativity and accountability provide an atmosphere which not only does not encourage experimentation but narrows pedagogy.

Benjamin (2002, p57) also maintains that pupils who are identified as needing help with their learning are placed:

*“outside the dominant versions of success that
the school works so hard to make desirable to
the rest of its students”*

Her argument continues that they are allocated a position of inferiority to other pupils and that their labelling is to protect the reputation of the school (or teachers). They cannot meet the targets with the learning approaches routinely used, therefore they have difficulties with learning, and it is also therefore acceptable to marginalise them and treat them differently from their peers. As also noted by Tomlinson (2001), such pupils are not the main priority in a system which places high value on certain skills/attributes of tradeable knowledge required to develop a strong economy. Within the marketisation of education such pupils are ‘managed’ in a way which does not threaten the prevailing discourse and does not required questions about pedagogy or curriculum to be addressed (Allan, 1999). Is it the case that these pupils are not seen as a priority because it is believed that they will not be able to influence the school success profile in an upward direction? It seems that teachers work under circumstances where they feel they lack the time, or skills to meet the needs of individual or groups of pupils who have additional support needs and neither do they have freedom to develop new or different approaches should they want to do so.

From my experience in the Scottish system I can identify with issues identified in the studies above, but the administration of education in England, and some of the organisational practices, differ, in some respects, from those which exist in Scotland. For example, in England pressures on teachers can arise from the publication of exam results in league tables of school performance which set schools to compete with each other and schools who do not meet their academic targets are deemed as ‘failing’. This study is set in Scotland, where these exact arrangements do not exist, and it is acknowledged in academic literature that there have been cultural differences which have influenced education practices in Scotland.

What was happening in respect of education in the UK needs to be viewed in relation to what was happening globally. In response to global economic and social change nation states were concerned with wealth creation. Being able to access or generate knowledge was considered crucial to this and so educational attainment was also seen as important (Doherty and McMahon, 2007). The influence of such concerns, leading to a focus on developing a knowledge economy and the foregrounding of education to achieve this, can be found in Scottish policy as evidenced in the following policy document:

“Competitive advantage will come from the application of intellect and knowledge to business problems. The skills Scotland will need to be successful can and should be fostered and grown in schools”.

Targeting Excellence (Scottish Office, 1999)

I will now consider, by looking at academic literature and policy texts, how the international policy narratives which relate to education were received and managed in Scotland and how this affected teachers and the work they do.

1.7 The Scottish context

Apart from being a separate country within the United Kingdom and where, since 1999, the governance of education has been administered by a devolved parliament, there are other ways in which Scotland is different from elsewhere in the UK. These include the forms of governance which were in place prior to devolution and the factors which have shaped the identity of Scottish education.

Popular history holds that, based on a tradition of free, public education, dating from John Knox’s 16th century vision of a school in every parish, Scottish education has developed along egalitarian lines. Part of this, what is now recognised as an idealised view, is that it enabled the *lad o’ pairts*, the poor working class boy, to advance through education irrespective of socio-economic circumstances (Smout, 1986). However, as Paterson (1983) notes, although a national system did develop from Knox’s vision, it was not egalitarian. The working class lad o’ pairts was rare and

most who achieved advancement based on merit were the sons of professional classes. For the majority who accessed education it was only to a very basic level and it was linked to the aims of the post-Reformation Protestant Church to equip individuals to be able to read the Bible. Education beyond that level was only for those who were considered academically able and it was formal and academic in nature. It was a system based on meritocratic rather than democratic principles.

The generally accepted view which developed, that Scottish education was democratic and a means to social mobility (Humes and Bryce, 2003) is now acknowledged as being more myth than reality. A ‘myth’ as explained by Gray, McPherson and Raffe (1983, p39), in the sense of a story that people tell about themselves “*to celebrate identity and express value*”, which tends to be historically grounded and have the capacity to endure but be adapted over time. Assumptions and thinking about education continue to be influenced by this myth, which expresses a very positive view, for as McCrone (1992, p88, in Arnott and Menter) tells us:

“although the egalitarian myth is often to be found in accounts of the Scottish past it is by no means dead, if only because history in the form of the reconstructed past is a potent social and political force in Scotland”.

The myth’s capability to influence contemporary thinking is noted by scholars such as Smout (1986) who suggests that it was a consequence of people’s belief in it that led to the adherence to traditional forms of education (the meritocratic and the formal) because there was such confidence in the system and a belief was held by many that it was “the best in the world” (p 228).

Contemporary information seems to affirm continuation of the belief that Scottish system works well to meet the needs of pupils. In 2002 a national consultation exercise, The National Debate (Scottish Executive, 2003), revealed widespread support for comprehensive education (the form of education provided by all local authority schools in Scotland) and a high level of trust in the teaching profession. This raises some concerns in that, given the view expressed that Scottish education was working well, combined with the assumptions based on traditionally held ideas

which support the continuance of academic, meritocratic traditions, it is unlikely that changes to education, which I believe are required to provide better learning conditions for pupils identified as having additional support needs, will be seen as a priority. How these shared assumptions about the egalitarian underpinning and the continuing success of Scottish education are likely to affect the thinking and practices of teachers in relation to pupils who have additional support needs I will examine in more detail later in this chapter but I firstly will consider, as noted by Humes (1986) and McPherson and Raab (1988) that policy makers in Scotland are influenced by distinctly Scottish culture, and how this has led them to respond differently to national and international policy agendas.

1.8 Local mediation of supranational policy agenda

The policy environment in the UK is influenced by a combination of global and local concerns. Ozga and Jones (2006) describe the process of how these concerns are reconciled for, while global policy agendas create ‘travelling’ policies they are ‘mediated’ in local contexts to reflect local priorities. Referring to the Scottish Government’s opportunity to mediate policy to reflect local concerns Arnott and Menter (2007 p255) note international, UK (as only some aspects of Scottish affairs are devolved to the Scottish Government) and Scottish influences in policy making:

“The Scottish Executive has to juggle pressures.... ensuring that policy is culturally and historically situated...take cognisance of UK treasury led policy developments and EU policy initiatives”.

International concerns relating to maintaining of competitiveness in a post-industrial knowledge based economy have led to emphasis on maximising efficiency and effectiveness (Osbourne and Gaebler, 1992). These concerns form part of a travelling policy agenda Scottish policy makers must respond to (Menter et al, 2004) while also influenced by its link with the UK Government which has advanced NPM reforms since the 1980s. This suggests limited opportunity for Scotland to have a very different policy agenda from elsewhere in the UK. I am interested to find out the extent to which the Scottish context has mediated travelling policies and how this affects Scottish teachers and the work they do.

Fergusson (2000) refers to discursive spaces which are available for policy makers in Scotland and which enable them to influence the effects of national policy. Ozga (2005), referring to the EGSIE study (of national and local policy contexts in nine European countries), writes that in the particular context of Scotland, there is a tradition of a policy making community which has included Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI), the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS), the Association of Directors of Education (ADES), the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), the Scottish Parent Teacher Council (SPTC) and the voices of teachers and headteachers (through their unions and professional associations) working with civil servants and Members of Parliament. This group have been able to influence the development of policies and the form of local governance adopted in Scotland (Paterson, 1994).

The following examples show instances of how national policy has been mediated and adapted to the Scottish context by the voices of that policy community (Paterson, 1994):

- Competition and direct parental involvement in the running of schools, through school boards or opting out of local authority control has not had the same impact in Scotland as in England
- Devolved School Management has given greater financial autonomy to individual schools but the vast majority of schools are provided by local authorities
- The power of the teachers' trade unions to oppose National Testing, at least as it was originally proposed, and their slowing down of the introduction of aspects of Higher Still.

Control of education has been devolved to the Scottish Parliament since 1999. It has given a commitment to developing an education system which acknowledges and values the role of education in creating and promoting social justice. In common with UK policy, Scottish social policy has stated its intent to embrace the wider political

view to promote educational attainment as part of a social justice agenda which also recognises the importance of long term goals.

The government's report *For Scotland's Children* (SEED, 2001) set the agenda to improve the co-ordination of all services all children and young people to:

“realise his/her potential in terms of emotional and social maturity, be in good health, and have attained a level of academic achievement and other skills” (Chapter 2).

The drive for improved social justice within the political agenda has been stated in various policy documents: the *National Priorities* set in 2000 (one was specifically Inclusion and Equality); The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act (2000) which established the right of every child to an education to develop his/her physical and mental abilities to their fullest potential, and also introduced the presumption of placement in mainstream education for all pupils and, *For Scotland's Children* (2001) which developed the inclusion agenda further by stating a commitment to create a society where all Scotland's children would be able to grow, learn, develop skills and become full participants in society with special focus given to the lowest attaining 20%. The broad intention of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) Act (2004) is that all school pupils, whatever their support needs, receive the support they require to benefit from school education.

However, while ensuring social justice for all was part of the political agenda, there were also indications of a commitment to embrace aspects of performativity. This is evidenced in the speech made by Jack McConnell, as Scotland's First Minister, in 2004, setting out his government's legislative programme, when he said that raising standards for all, offering choice to pupils and narrowing the gap between the highest and lowest attainers were goals but that this was to be achieved within “*a regime of tough accountabilities*”.

The style of the Scottish Parliament is intended to encourage public participation and seeks to develop a more populist approach to policy making than the centralist model

of the Westminster Government. In the Scottish system the committees conduct their business in public and there is pre-legislative scrutiny through a range of civic consultation mechanisms. A relevant example in the context of education planning is the National Debate on Education (Scottish Executive 2003). It consulted extensively throughout the country: around 20,000 people took part and 1500 responses were received (Munn, Stead, Macleod, Brown, Cowrie, McCluskey, Pirrie, Scott, 2004). The main drivers for change which developed from this (Education for Excellence (2003); A Curriculum for Excellence (2004)) were informed by the responses to the debate and they were concerned not only with attainment and school improvement but also with issues of social equity and professional practice.

In 2001 the McCrone Agreement (Scottish Executive, 2001) introduced an improved career and salary structure for teachers, set an agenda for further developing professional autonomy, and created the context and expectations for teachers to be involved in shaping policy (at school and authority level) :

“for the future, the working relationships between teacher organisations, employers and the Scottish Executive (now called the Scottish Government) will be based on mutual respect and understanding, on shared responsibility and on the shared development of ideas and programmes for change” (p1)

The process that led to this agreement had been based on what Menter, Mahoney and Hextall (2004, p204) refer to as a “*collectivist developmental professional model*”. A breakdown in salary negotiations had precipitated the need for something to be done and the government’s response was to set up a committee of inquiry. This committee included representatives from the teaching profession and it was the committee who authored the final report, after wide consultation with teachers and teachers were balloted on whether or not to accept the final recommendations.

1.9 NPM at national and local level

Although the above is evidence that policy development in Scotland is more consensual than in England (Menter et al, 2004), and that it operates in a way where

there is less emphasis on market-based approaches (than in England) and with more emphasis on professional modes of accountability (Arnott and Menter, 2007) there is also evidence that Scottish education, in common with England, is characterised by centralised direction and systems of steering and control.

Croxford et al (2009) trace a growing emphasis on quality assurance and evaluation (QAE) in Scottish policy instruments from the 1980s when, influenced by UK-wide pressure to improve public services by adopting NPM practices, the Management Of Education Resources Unit (which became The Audit Unit) was set up by HMI. It published papers identifying characteristics of a good school and between 1990 and 1997 a number of policy instruments further developed procedures and guidance in relation to QAE.

In 1990/91 the Audit Unit published school attainment data for parents and, in 1991 *“The role of school development planning in managing effectiveness”* (SOED, 1991a) was published along with statistical data, *“Using examination results in school self evaluation: Relative ratings and national comparison figures”* (SOED, 1991b). These enabled secondary schools to compare examination performance across departments in schools and with other schools nationally. Circular 1/94 (SOED, 1994) gave guidance to schools on how to use development planning to improve standards and articulated that local authorities were expected to ensure that each school produced development plans in line with the guidance. With the publication of *“How good is our school? Self evaluation using performance indicators”* (SOEID, 1996) schools were provided with the performance indicators used by HMI. These provided the base-line for school self-evaluation and development planning, and then in 1997 *“Quality initiative in Scottish schools”* (SOEID, 1997) set out details of partnership working between HMI, local authorities and schools. This required local authorities to produce standards and quality reports using the key indicators identified by *How Good Is Our School? (HGIOS?)* documents and to support and validate schools’ development planning and self evaluation within the *HGIOS?* framework. In 2000, the first piece of education legislation by the devolved Scottish government, the Standards in Scotland’s Schools

etc Act made local authority and school development planning a statutory requirement.

These HGIOS? audit systems and development planning at school level provide a means by which performance can be monitored. The criteria by which success is judged are set out in *HGIOS?* and the responsibility for monitoring that the required standards are being met has been devolved to the local authority (Cowie and Croxford, 2006) in Croxford et al (2009, p 183). We see in this, as already noted by Dale (1999) in relation to practices in England, evidence of government control and surveillance from a distance. This contrasts with the vision expressed in the *McCrone Agreement* (Scottish Executive, 2001, p28) to enhance teacher autonomy, elevate their professional status, and give them influence in decision-making processes at local and national levels.

In Scotland, while centralist controls may have been mediated so that there are not the same “terrors” (Ball, 2003) of accountability, performance monitoring and centrally led interventions as experienced in England, there is evidence that the work of teachers is, nevertheless, heavily regulated and monitored:

“Collectively, Scotland’s teacher workforce has never been more accountable, observed, statistically analysed and held firmly in the grip of a growing plethora of policy exhortations, requirements and priorities”

(Doherty and McMahon, 2007, p254).

It has been suggested previously that a focus on performance-led statistical outcomes in education can adversely affect the professional development and emotional well-being of teachers, narrow the focus of their work and mitigate against social justice by marginalising certain groups of pupils. The situation as described by Doherty and McMahon (ibid) raises concerns about the pupils who are the subject of my research as it has been previously suggested (Gewirtz, 2002; Ranson, 2003), that the pressures caused by the requirements of performativity can reduce the time teachers have to ensure that there are successful learning opportunities provided for all pupils. I now

look at the main instruments of regulation from the ‘plethora’ referred to above and consider how they might affect the practices of teachers in Scotland.

I will do this by firstly considering the national policy tools which create the circumstances under which the teachers work, then refer specifically to the processes in the authority where my study is located.

Tools of regulation and control

Quality control mechanisms which enable government to monitor the progress and attainment of schools and local include the following:

- statistical data streams to track exam performance (STAC) and a national information management system (ScotXed)
- HMIE inspection
- development planning, self evaluation and local monitoring

Statistical Data

Although Scotland does not produce league tables of school performance as does England, national examination and test results for individual schools (SQA and 5-14) are annually submitted to the government through a national data gathering platform, ScotXed, and data are made available in the public domain. Standard Tables and Charts are produced to enable within school (between department) comparisons and also across school comparisons. This allows schools to evaluate their performance against schools with similar intake profiles. While this sort of statistical information can make it possible to identify any subjects or schools who are particularly successful, and this allows them to share good practice relative to success in areas where pupils do less well in examinations, it is not the only use such information is put to. Although no system exists in Scotland to publish league tables of schools based on exam results, that the results and comparisons do exist, and are in the public domain means that the press are free to present them as they wish and this they do.

The tables produced in the national press can be used by the public to make judgements about the relative standing of schools based on the numbers of pupils achieving Standard Grades or Highers.

HMIe Inspection Process

Although its status has recently altered (to that of an agency) HMIe is still an authoritative body in Scottish education. While the Inspectorate have no executive power they do have an advisory role within the Scottish policy making forum, and the influence they have been able to exert is acknowledged (Gallacher, 1999). They are still the main body for the evaluation of practices in schools and local authorities. In addition to their rolling programme of inspections, HMI publish reports on national standards, at three yearly intervals. Their report *Standards and Quality in Primary and Secondary Schools: 1998-2001* (HMI 2001) acknowledged that progress towards the targets set in the previous report had been made but also clearly stated an expectation of ‘continuous improvement’. The relationship between in-school processes and financial management which reflects the value for money aspect of NPM and the link between education and the nation’s financial status is also made clear:

“Links between school development plans and financial management need to be more explicit in order to ensure Best Value is achieved by schools”

(ibid, piii)

“If Scotland is to compete in the increasingly competitive global environment of the twenty-first century...schools must be at the centre of the improvement process”

(ibid.)

For schools to engage in ‘continuous improvement’, the document advises that they give more attention to the standards of performance criteria HMI provides. Advice, specifically directed at teachers, in the document which explains and exemplifies performance criteria *HGIOS?* (2002, 2006 and now 2007), asserts that school self evaluation, through systematic evaluation of performance against the criteria indicators, ‘is at the heart of good quality assurance’. The advice given clearly

supports the view that ongoing evaluation, to inform planning to facilitate production of measurable outcomes within the specific, given parameters (parameters as specified by HMIE), is expected. The implicit assumption, that following the formulaic system HMIE provides equates with practices to be aimed for, is reflected by the slogan in their logo (HMIE – improving Scottish Education) where a direct connection is made between itself (and, ergo, its practices) and improvement. It is also interesting to note here the language used in the document. Sargisson's (1996) observation (rooted in feminist thinking) that the way in which Western thought is ordered is based on binary opposition (Derrida, 1972) whereby language acquires meaning by reference to that which it is not, and one term also evokes that which is opposite, leads to an understanding of how the terms in the *HGIOS* ? documents present the process they are asking teachers to engage with in a very positive way which suggests that there is no other acceptable alternative. By saying that '*self evaluation is at the heart of good quality assurance*' and '*self evaluation, change and improvement are... natural and essential*' the text, by evoking the opposite meanings, leads to an acceptance of what it contains and a rejection of what it does not. The very change of terminology used for the performance criteria indicators from *performance indicators* in earlier documentation, to *quality indicators* in the revised (2002 and subsequent) documents is illustrative of how word choice can be used to represent concepts in a way which suggests they are unproblematic.

In recent years schools have expected to be inspected by HMIE once every six years. Standards of performance are determined by HMIE and set out in their *HGIOS*? documentation. The process has been subject to some changes in methodology and there is now (from 2008 onwards) more emphasis on self evaluation, but the criteria against which practice is to be measured continues to be the HMIE quality indicators and, the authoritative arbiters of ascribed levels of competency, through the inspection process, are HMIE inspectors.

Development planning and self evaluation

The local authority's policies, procedures and advice to teachers sit within existing national legislation and guidelines. The Scotland's Schools (etc) Act (2000) identifies a duty for education authorities to secure improvement in the quality of school education,

“an education authority shall endeavour to secure improvement in the quality of school education.... and they shall exercise their functions..... with a view to raising standards of education”

In the local authority where this study is set the Education Department's planning documents (2003-2008) set out the aims, objectives and outcomes for school education in the authority and thus, a steer to the content of school plans. They provide a framework for improvement to be achieved through performance review, development planning and self-evaluation – all of which are subject to scrutiny through a programme of termly visits to each school from the authority's Quality Improvement Officers.

The NPM features of audit, quality assurance, monitoring, and goals of increased efficiency, economy and effectiveness are apparent throughout the plan where there is emphasis on the importance of auditable targets:

“the department wishes to achieve and express these (aims in the plan) as clear..... and measurable targets where possible.”

(Local Authority Service Improvement Plan 2003-05, p2)

Development planning at school level, the use of the *HGIOS?* documents, and the production of data by the school, for the authority, are identified as key components of the authority's strategy. The authority's role to monitor plans and progress towards targets, and evaluate outcomes in line with selected quality indicators (these mainly determined by the authority) is clearly set out. Features of NPM – the importance of the role of management, accountability through quality control

mechanisms, and effectiveness judged by attainment of pre-defined measurable outcomes are apparent in the local authority's document *Achieving Excellence* (2003, p2):

“The key to improvement lies with schools and depends on successful management and leadership..... Comprehensive, up-to-date and accurate management information is required.....to support performance monitoring.”

Development planning is no longer only a tool to inform managing and planning for improvement, but since 2000, it is an activity which all schools are required to do. It is a whole school activity which is undertaken annually and what is contained in it should reflect the priorities set out in the authority's Service Improvement Plan. Each subject department, and therefore the areas of work to be undertaken by every teacher, is included in the plan and it is only those activities which are included in the development plan which can be allocated time and resources over the session it relates to. In times of competing priorities and reducing resources it can be difficult, (this I know from my own experience as a teacher and as a local authority officer) to have issues relating to a minority of pupils (e.g. those who have been identified as having additional support needs) included in any whole school planning. School based programmes and developments are dictated by what is in the plan and, in the course of a school session, where time and roles have been allocated, it is often not possible for staff to find time to allocate time either to any emerging needs or to issues relating to a small group of pupils from within the whole school population, within a series of competing agendas. Any difficulties pupils may have in accessing the curriculum may be difficult to predict before the event, but the capacity for subject departments and teachers to respond to them can be restricted by the requirements of the development plan.

The local authority quality assurance procedure follows largely similar lines to the HMIe inspection procedure. There is a calendar of pre-planned visits to each school throughout the year by local authority officers and the basis for discussions with the school(s) is the school's own self-evaluation documentation which is based on performance criteria descriptions (quality indicators) from the *HGIOS?* documentation. Selected indicators, determined mainly by the authority, are

identified as being the focus for each visit. It is, and has been, practice for one of the annual visits to have a focus on the most recent exam performance data.

As detailed above, the setting and monitoring of targets within a local authority determined framework; self-evaluation using *HGIOS* indicators; the production /collection of evidence which relates to these indicators, and the collection/evaluation of local and national statistics relating to exam performance are required practices for all teachers. Such a focus on performance data ensures that teachers concentrate on specific areas of work e.g. literacy, numeracy, improved exam performance, and with the intention of driving up standards.

1.10 NPM and teaching – contradictions and tensions

The documents and processes referred to above exemplify policy and practice which privilege measurable outcomes over other aspects of learning and teaching and, from what has been suggested previously, it would seem that it is likely that this could restrict the practices of teachers to focus on activities which generate measurable evidence of success. This is of particular relevance in relation to the pupils who are the focus of this study, for, as identified by Gewirtz (2002), it could lead to less time being available for teachers to interact with individual pupils and to respond to their needs. The documents and processes referred to also show the extent to which teachers are required to operate under systems of performativity and accountability. As policy objectives also set goals of promoting social inclusion, the education system can be seen to be being pulled in two oppositional directions – one to focus on the measurable outcomes of raising academic attainment, the other to adopt inclusive practices to meet a wide range of needs for all pupils, and this raises the issue of a possible source of tension for teachers. As Allan (2008) states, there is potential for the two goals, one of raising attainment through a regime of target-setting, and the other of social inclusion, to contradict and undermine each other. The current inclusion discourse identifies categories of pupils who ‘underachieve’ due to factors such as poverty, ethnicity or having additional needs, while the raising standards agenda discourages their inclusion due to its focus on performativity (Gillborn and Youdell, 2001) in Allan (2008, p290) Additionally, the self-evaluation

with reference to descriptors set by HMIe has the potential to restrict teachers' thinking to within the limits defined by the set descriptors of what constitutes a 'good school' and there is a danger that such practices, "locate ownership of emerging deficiency, inadequacy, and underperformance in the self-evaluating self of the teacher" (Doherty and McMahon, 2007, p 256). Not only is the pupil related data they produce a form of surveillance over the pupils, teachers' performance can also be judged by that data. Thus it becomes in their interest to make sure that their pupils do well.

Power (1997) reminds us that NPM relies on the belief that audits are effective, can deliver assurance, contribute to compliance and stimulate best practice. However, as argued by Fairley and Paterson (1995), these assumptions are problematic when applied to education as the process of education does not readily lend itself to statistical analysis in the same way as other areas of human activity do. Where some aspects of service provision can be expressed as quantifiable, easily measured targets e.g. the number of individuals who access a particular service or take a particular subject in school, there are other processes involved in education which are not easily expressed in the form of a limited, predictable outcome e.g. self esteem, the development of judgement, the capacity of an individual to interact with others. There is perhaps a danger that the implied objectivity of a scientific process of data gathering and analysis gives such data privileged status which then leads to a focus on the measurement of activities rather than the activities themselves and that this can lead to, as identified by Wrigley(2003) the acceptance of the NPM emphasis on cost effectiveness and audit mechanisms, the tacit acceptance of a 'school effectiveness' discourse which privileges measurable outcomes over any other aspect of teaching and learning, and the acceptance of government policies on the believed basis that they lead to improved test scores.

For teachers then, there are possible tensions of practice and values created by the current policies and expected practices. Managerialism and performativity require of them that they are target -driven and accountable through statistical returns and ongoing evaluation. While the school-based process of self-evaluation can be

regarded as empowering in that some responsibility is given to teachers, this can lead also to the allocation of blame, or the perception of such, on teachers who teach pupils who do not easily achieve pre-set standards which are benchmarked nationally as well as locally, and working within pre-set targets and identified outcomes could limit teachers' autonomy to respond creatively to pupils. Additionally, the culture and practices of the continuous improvement agenda seems to be at odds with an agenda which expects the inclusion of pupils for whom academic success and/or continuous, measurable improvement may be unlikely or problematic. In the next section I consider how the professional identities and practices of teachers in Scotland might be influenced by current circumstances. To better understand how teachers position themselves and react to such circumstances, I look at how professional identities and expectations were formed prior to the changes brought about by the introduction of market-led principles to replace the welfarist consensus.

1.11 Teachers' professional identities – from the 'myth' to McCrone

Teachers are socially constructed by their biographies and social events of the times they teach in (Ball and Goodson, 1985) and individuals are created by, but are also creators of, the social arrangements under which they live (C Wright Mills, 1959). So that I can find out more about the practices of teachers in relation to a certain group of pupils and how these practices might be changed, I need to consider aspects of past and current circumstances which influence teachers' professional identities and which might become manifest in their practice and how they contribute to the social arrangements for the pupils they teach.

Scottish education has traditionally been regarded as one of the three features (the others being law and the Church) of a distinctive culture (Humes and Bryce, 2003). There are arguments that in Scotland, the notion of education as an instrument to improve society which can be traced back to the seventeenth century, and the long-held belief that that a tradition of egalitarianism did, and should, prevail in education, was the reason that the centralist, market-led approaches to education advanced by Thatcherism did not, generally, meet with approval. However, in trying to understand how teachers in Scotland did, and do, position themselves in relation to a market-led

system of accountability while also managing the demands to make education socially inclusive, further reading of academic analyses has revealed that much of the persisting view of egalitarianism in education, and its role as a tool for social improvement, is not wholly accurate.

Scotland (1969) gives a wide-ranging account of factors which have contributed to the status and professional viewpoint of teachers in Scotland where, from the 16th century and John Knox's plan for a school in every parish, the influence of religion was present and education was regarded as:

“ a weapon to fight ignorance and establish the truth...to control error, to keep the flock in the paths of righteousness” (p 288)

This introduced a stern, disciplining Calvinist ethos of formal authoritarianism and an emphasis on traditional, academic subjects: an ethos which has been a persisting influence on Scottish education. Although Knox's vision helped create what was to become a powerful and influential 'myth' (McCrone, 1992) about the egalitarian nature of educational provision where the 'lad o' pairts', the poor but clever boy, could access education, Knox's idea was, in reality, one which embodied principles of meritocracy rather than egalitarianism. His plans were for an education system where schools would teach standards of acceptable social behaviour, a level of literacy enough to be able to read the Bible and where only the most able would be able to go from the local school to secondary school and then to university. From Knox's aspirations parish schools, burgh schools and a national system of education did develop and, in a small, poor country, the idea that individuals could, through academic success, achieve upward social mobility, found favour. However, so too did the meritocratic tradition, a focus on a formal, academic education, and an illiberal curriculum (Paterson, 1983).

Although access to beyond only basic education under such a system was open to all, in reality, the possibility of achieving this was restricted to only a relative few and the principle of 'sifting' out a select few to go onto higher education while providing only the basic education for the others persisted to become the dominant paradigm in

Scottish education (Smout, 1986). The urbanisation and industrialisation in the 19th century led to Scottish society being increasingly polarised by wealth. While there was increased demand for basic education (which was neither universal nor free), the principle of basic education for most with only an elite being able to access higher education and university persisted. The certification of academic ability which was introduced in 1888- as a means to show suitability for university entrance- has been identified as demonstrative of the importance given to academic attainment in the thinking of the Scottish policy makers of the time (Paterson, 1983). As education expanded and eventually, compulsory education for all was introduced in the first half of the 20th century, the acceptance of the principle of only a basic education for those identified as non-academic persisted and a bi-partite system of post-primary education was established where class and job orientation were considered to be suitable identifiers of the type of education an individual required. There was one type of (junior) secondary school for the non-academic pupils (destined for manual occupations) and another (senior) secondary school for the academic pupils who were destined to go to university and join one of the professions and, as the names suggest, higher status was given to preparing able pupils for Highers (McPherson, 1993). The bi-partite division of pupils into categories of either academic or non-academic persisted even after the introduction of comprehensive schools in the 1960s where pupils who were either identified as being unable to attain the O Grade examinations (taken at the end of the fourth year) or chose to seek employment rather than stay on to take them, could leave at age 15 after three years of secondary education but with no external certification.

Contrary then, to the popular myth of egalitarianism, there is actually a long tradition in Scottish education of selectivity and a focus on the academic achievement potential of an elite group. Scotland's (1969) authoritative account describes a system of education which was generally formal, inflexible and conservative; where there was strong academic bias and the training of the intellect was considered paramount; where there was a tradition of competitive elitism and the 'few' were selected to join the privileged; where any experimentation or change to practice was received cautiously, and the teacher was regarded as an expert with the role of

passing on of acquired knowledge in a disciplined environment. Scotland (1969, p275) notes the status and importance previously given to the teacher within the Scottish tradition:

“ the most important person in the school, no matter what the theorists say, is not the pupil, but the..teacher”

This is at variance with current thinking which places the pupil and not the teacher at the centre. When considering how teachers may have come to perceive of, or position, their professional selves, the effect of the traditions and beliefs referred to above are relevant. Where the myth creates the impression that the long-established practices have served the interests of social justice well, and there has been a tendency towards conservatism (in relation to practice), it suggests that it would not be surprising to find that teachers - who themselves are likely to be products of the system and have benefited from it - would be given to feeling disposed to maintaining the prevailing values and practices. It is possible to understand how, coming from within a cultural tradition where the myth of egalitarianism, the central authority, the status of the teacher and the prioritisation of academic attainment have informed their beliefs, teachers may be inclined to resist, challenge or resent suggestions that the changes to their role and status - as has been the case as the purpose of education in society has been subject to rethinking and repositioning. The view of Scottish education as a successful enterprise is not only found in the long-held beliefs teachers in Scotland but is also acknowledged at national and international level and this can be seen to consolidate such a viewpoint. The status of Scottish trained teachers is set above those trained in other countries: teachers trained and registered with the Scottish GTC can teach in England, the converse is not true and, for any teacher to teach in Scotland they must meet the standards set for Scottish GTC registration. A recent OECD report (2007) concluded that Scottish education performs at a consistently high standard and Scotland has one of the most equitable school systems in the OECD. From a long-standing position of high status and educational success in the international arena there have been mixed and perhaps puzzling messages for teachers in recent years who have felt under pressure as a consequence of criticisms to their practice (Gatherer, 2003).

Governmental responses to complex global changes in relation to economic and environmental uncertainty have given education a key role in developing human capital as a means to ensure wealth production. Mediated by local circumstances (British and Scottish), this has contributed to the restructuring of the role of teachers (Bottery, 2006; Doherty and McMahon, 2007). While subject expertise and a degree of professional autonomy in exercising their judgement are still expected, as a consequence of the modernisation of public services since post 1979, reduced expenditure, efficiency, economy and audit, and centralised control and surveillance through systems of self evaluation and the monitoring of targets are also part of the current work order for teachers. As previously discussed, the implementation of the policies and practices arising from the managerialist approaches now current have the potential to create tensions for teachers, as noted by Doherty and McMahon (2007, p262)

“The teacher under New Labour is caught in a vice composed of a set of centrally determined requirements and policy demands and a responsabilization for their successes and implementation at local level”.

A range of key documents have set out such centrally determined requirements, an important one which provides advice in respect of good practice for teachers in relation to working with pupils with additional support needs is the SOEID publication, “Effective Provision for Special Educational Needs” (1994). It continued to reflect the view expressed by HMI in 1978 that the majority of learning difficulties were created by the curriculum and that teachers were expected to exercise their professional judgement and skills to provide for the needs of pupils through differentiation, individualisation, adaptation, enhancement and elaboration. Subsequent policy and guidance documents from SOEID and HMIE (*Special Educational Needs in Scotland: A Discussion Paper* (1998); *Standards in Primary and Secondary Schools* (2002); *Count Us In* (2002); *Moving Forward* (2003)), brought together the expectations that teachers should create appropriate educational experiences for the whole range of pupil abilities and that the raising standards

agenda should include raising the attainment of pupils with, what were then referred to as, 'special needs'.

All of these national documents and the most recent legislation in respect of pupils with additional support needs, Education (Additional Support for Learning) Act (2004) require of teachers that they assume the responsibility for managing and delivering the learning of all children and young people, including those with severe and complex learning support needs. Difficulties reconciling the two opposing agendas of raising standards while meeting the needs of all pupils have already been referred to and additionally, teachers who provided evidence to a committee of inquiry to look into the pay and service conditions for teachers (prior the *McCrone Agreement* – see below) raised further issues in terms of the professions current capacity to meet the demands expected of it in respect of teaching pupils with additional support needs.

The McCrone Agreement (Scottish Executive, 2001), the document which contained the details of arrangements to be implemented to improve service conditions for teachers, has contributed hugely to the professional identities of teachers in Scotland (and generally referred to thereafter as *McCrone*). It restructured the role of teachers in a way which was consistent with the modernisation of public services agenda but also set out to enhance the professional standing and increase the autonomy of teachers. It introduced: flatter management structures in schools; local negotiations in respect of policy and planning decisions; flexibility of job remits for teachers; a requirement for teachers to engage in continuous professional development, and a time allocation within the working week for teachers to be involved in policy planning and review at school level. It was the intention that these arrangements would create “a teaching profession for the 21st century” (the sub-title of the report which introduced them) and, in return for changes to working arrangements, teachers were given a limit to their working week; reduced class contact time; identification of tasks which should be carried out by support staff and not teachers; recognition of professional achievement through the introduction of Chartered Teacher.

In compiling evidence for the *McCrone Report* (Scottish Executive, 2000) views of teachers were sought. These views are a source of information about what teachers were thinking and feeling about their professional roles and identities. What they said raises issues which I believe are relevant to the teaching of pupils with additional support needs.

Teaching in Scotland is currently a predominantly Scottish, female workforce with 75% of teachers female (53% in secondary). While there has been an increase in the number of teachers in their twenties since 2005, 65% of teachers are over 40 and there is a major peak at age 53 (statistics from www.openscotland.gov.uk) Given that the *McCrone Report* (2000) found that lack of early retirement opportunities “*fosters frustration and anger amongst older teachers who have ‘burnt out’*” (*ibid*, p89) this suggests a possible area of concern where so many teachers currently fall into the category of ‘older’ and, therefore, potentially experiencing burn-out. Specific concerns associated with teaching pupils with additional needs were identified by teachers who gave evidence to the, and of particular relevance to this thesis:

“there was general concern throughout many of the questions askedthat social inclusion policies were creating difficulties for teachers. In most cases, it was felt that these would be better dealt with by other individuals or agencies.....as teachers have neither the resources, time or expertise” (*ibid*, p68)

Other problems frequently cited by teachers which could potentially be of relevance for practice relating to pupils with additional support needs, were : the need for more in-class support; the time having to be spent on administrative tasks – in addition to existing workload problems, and the need for more support with information technology.

Arguments previously considered would suggest that the performativity culture in schools may lead to teachers feeling unable to find the time to develop or engage in practices which enable them to meet the needs of individual pupils. Teachers themselves have identified lack of skills, lack of time and lack of in-class support as needs of their own which are not being met. That pupils with additional support

needs can take up additional time, require adaptation to materials or methodology or require teachers to acquire new skills or knowledge in respect of the nature of learning needs individual pupils suggests that some teachers may not currently feel that they are able to teach pupils who have additional support needs. I consider that this might impact on the classroom circumstances for pupils with additional support needs.

The McCrone report was implemented in 2001. It offered changes to conditions and a salary deal which was attractive to teachers, and it also contained government steered intentions regarding the “*repositioning of teachers and teaching within the educational enterprise*” (Menter et al, 2004, p198). One aspect of such repositioning was an intention of the new conditions to create a culture of increased autonomy and where teachers would be fully involved in the decision making processes in school. However, a study by MacDonald (2004) concurred with what had previously been acknowledged (Humes, 1986), that compliance was a feature of Scottish education. MacDonald’s study found that teachers tended not to actively engage in planning or decision making processes but positioned themselves in roles subordinate to the hegemonic structure; attributed responsibility for their actions upward in the hierarchy, viewing new developments as being prescriptive, and did not challenge changes to practice they were asked to implement even when they did not agree with them. They tended to attribute responsibility for their actions in implementing developments upwards in the hierarchical chain of command (to headteacher, local authority, central government).

MacDonald offers suggestions for why this might be; one is that teachers feel powerless to influence the controlling hegemony. Examples given of this are: the eventual imposition of national testing despite initial successes in resisting it, the introduction of 5-14 without any meaningful consultation, and the changes to working practices to be required after the *McCrone Agreement* (Scottish Executive, 2001). Another reason suggested was that compliance is what is asked of them. Humes (1994) suggests that even when there is dissonance between teachers’ values and what they are asked to do, compliance is rewarded by career success and also

that the culture of schools discourages dissent. The evidence of MacDonald's study raises concerns as it suggests that teachers may not feel able to resist practices which do not support the development of social justice and equity, either for themselves or the pupils they teach. While it relates to primary school teachers, it is illustrative of how the existing hegemony in Scottish education can be so strong that even where there is dissonance between what teachers want to do and what they actually do (because they feel they must do so) they do not challenge this. Relating to pupils with additional support needs, this may mean that teachers are more likely to perpetuate rather than challenge arrangements which create conditions which are not socially just. Considering this with the other evidence cited by teachers previously: that there are issues about their workload; there is a lack of support in classes; they believe they lack suitable skills to enable them to meet the needs of all pupils and, there is a tradition of conservatism which privileges academic learning, it may be that current circumstances do not support the learning of pupils who have additional support needs to be fully addressed in mainstream classes.

Another major influence on the professional identities of teachers in Scotland is the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS), the union which represents around 80% of teachers in Scotland and is acknowledged as an influential body in the Scottish policy making forum. The EIS position on the concept of inclusive education is set out in the *Report of the EIS Committee on Inclusive Education* (2007). It expresses support for a social justice agenda and the government's aim to reduce the gap between the advantaged and disadvantaged in society, but it also expresses a view that inclusive education must be supported by adequate resourcing. Echoing the views expressed by those teachers who gave evidence to the McCrone Inquiry, it asks that government and local authorities provide the necessary conditions and resources: smaller class sizes; time for teachers for planning and/supporting learning for pupils who have additional support needs; specialised placements for some pupils; more specialised teachers (ASN), and more training for existing teachers. One would expect that a trade union would represent the views of its members and, where it is accurate, it is right and proper for any lack of resources or unrealistic demands being on teachers to be identified and made public. However, it seems that the EIS

paper restates issues already expressed and does not offer advice to teachers how they might use their knowledge and skills and be active in their (relatively) new collegiate roles created under the McCrone Agreement to challenge and change any aspects of pedagogy, practice or thinking which make inclusive education, within the current system parameters, difficult to achieve. Where there was perhaps opportunity to empower teachers to be agents of change and influence practice in line with their judgements and identified requirements it seems to cast them as passive actors waiting for either the government or the local authority to change things for the better, reinforcing the compliance which MacDonald's (2004) study found.

1.12 Summary

In my work as a support for learning teacher I often thought that teachers both could, and should, do more for pupils who have additional support needs. In this chapter I explored the wider policy contexts which frame and shape the work of teachers and how this affects their teaching of pupils with additional support needs and I have arrived at a better understanding of how teachers work is affected by many factors and that these can create tensions and difficulties in their work with pupils who have additional support needs.

Managerialist practices, with a focus on reduced expenditure, regulation and accountability have become features of the modernised, market-driven public services from 1979. In education there is also the demand to raise standards so that individuals have the necessary skills to contribute to a competitive and successful economy. For teachers there is pressure to conform to centralised prescription, to achieve set targets to be seen to be 'successful', and more time is required to be spent on administrative work. This creates stress for teachers, lessens the time available to work with pupils and tends to narrow the focus of the work they do to make it assessment orientated. They are placed under pressure to raise standards, they are experiencing increased work load and pace of work, and they must work with managerialist concepts of user market driven choice, competition, economy and mechanisms of audit, in a profession traditionally concerned with care, equity and relationships between individuals. They are increasingly accountable and subject to

systems of surveillance, at levels of national, local and self. Pupils with additional support needs are marginalised as they are likely to require more time, specially differentiated approaches and also are less likely than other pupils to achieve success which can be expressed as a performance statistic.

Looking specifically at the Scottish context, while it has been noted that systems of performativity are not as extreme as in England, Scottish teachers can still be seen to work under systems of regulation and surveillance and, therefore, it can be speculated that the restrictive effects on practice for pupils with additional support needs are likely to be similar. Although as Menter (2005) observes, there are few studies available specifically relating to Scottish teachers, the data available concurs with findings relating to other countries. Teachers interviewed for *The Teachers Health and Wellbeing Study* (NHS, 2004) cited the perception of perpetual change, the Scottish government's inclusion policy and the amount of administrative work they are required to do as factors which caused stress. Those who gave evidence to *McCrone Inquiry* (2000) identified paperwork, workload, lack of time and the need for more in-class support for pupils with additional support needs as causes for concern to them. Also, Scottish cultural and historical factors are identified as influencing the education system so that it prioritises the academic and has led to the development of a teaching workforce with a mindset which tends to be conservative, cautious and compliant. Scottish education is also underpinned by the belief that the system is egalitarian and that it has, and continues to, serve the needs of social justice well and this view is supported by contemporary evidence. This leads me to conclude that current assumptions and practices may mean that teachers are not best placed to see the need for or feel able to, lead changes to practice which would ensure that the arrangements in place for pupils with additional support needs are socially just.

Chapter 2 Conceptualisations of learning difficulties

2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, after considering the policy contexts which shape and influence the assumptions and practices of teachers, I concluded that there may be some aspects of the contexts and circumstances in which teachers work which make it difficult for them to be attentive to, or in a position to change, aspects of practice which mitigate against social justice for pupils with additional support needs. In this chapter I will examine the changing conceptualisations of learning difficulties which, over time, have moved from practices of labelling and separating pupils to inclusion. I also consider how these have influenced teachers' understandings and practice arrangements, taking into account issues of power relations and social justice and with special reference to the arrangements with the local authority in which this study is set.

Although Scotland did not have a separate parliament until 1999, prior to that systems of law and education were separate and different from the rest of the UK. In this chapter I will refer to instruments of regulation which apply to Scotland (which is where my study is set) and UK instruments only where they pertain to Scotland also.

2.2 Positivism and segregative practice

While it is true that there have been moves away from practices which now, would be considered discriminatory and unacceptable e.g. the term 'handicap', which was an official term used to describe young people up until 1978, there are academic texts (Barton and Tomlinson, 1984; Tomlinson 1982; Oliver 1988; Hammersley, 1995, Thomas and Loxley, 2001) which suggest that the less liberal thinking of the past continues to influence current thinking about the conceptualisation and practice arrangements in respect of additional support needs and that these do not serve well the interests of the pupils. To begin to understand how this has come about, I will

take as my starting point a historical overview of the policy context from 1945 onwards as the 1945 Education (Scotland) Act was the first piece of legislation in Scotland which required local authorities to provide education for all children. This piece of legislation exemplifies the separatist thinking which accepted that pupils with learning difficulties required to be treated differently from their peers. Although local authorities were required to provide education for all children, according to their aptitude and ability, it did not extend the right of education to all children as we understand the term “all” to mean now, but introduced a three tier system where children were categorised as educable, trainable or untrainable. It has been noted (Dockrell, Dunn and Milne, 1978) that such a system which identified some children as uneducable or untrainable classified them lower in abilities than performing circus animals. To better understand how such a position, which now is antithetical to current thinking, was considered acceptable, it is necessary to consider the understandings on which it was based.

The 1945 legislation required that authorities identify, at the age of 5, through a medical process, any children who had a disability “of mind or body” which required “special educational treatment”. To carry out the process of identification to meet this duty, authorities could require children to be submitted for a medical examination and then, for children who were assessed to be disabled, ‘special education’, either at a school or an occupational centre was provided. Children who were identified as too severely disabled to be able to benefit from either education or placement in an occupational centre were placed in establishments which were not administered by education. The ‘medicalisation’ of the process is evident from the terms used and such a medical model for identifying and addressing individual learning difficulties was based on beliefs that concepts which could be measured by psychometric testing could predict learning ability. This was informed by a paradigm (positivism) which was based on a 19th century theory of knowledge which asserted that the tools of scientific enquiry would be able to provide explanations of social phenomena in the way they had done for the physical world (Hughes and Sharrock, 1997). In accepting the methodology of their peers in the natural sciences, social scientists also accepted a particular view about the nature of knowledge, research

design principles and the existence of a stable, reliable social world which could be observed, measured and recorded in a value neutral way. The belief that the model of scientific epistemology could be applied to all human enquiry was a major influencing factor in 20th century sociological enquiry and gave rise to the application of the method of scientific empiricism – questioning, describing, quantifying and categorising observable phenomena – to human behaviours so that the workings of the human mind could be inferred. Social scientists developed what they considered to be objective instruments, such as questionnaires, attitude scales and tests. By observing sensory and motor functions, they believed that the intellectual potential of the human mind could be revealed (Kaplan and Saccuzzo, 1982) and based on beliefs that using such tests, an individual's general learning potential could be measured independent of prior learning, they were used to identify individuals who either would or would not be able to achieve academic success. Such testing was believed to provide accurate, useful data about human learning potential. The data it could generate became useful as it was considered desirable to be able to identify those who had the innate potential to benefit from education, those who would not be able to do so, and those would need some form of specialised support. As a method for matching individuals to learning settings most suited to their aptitudes and needs, testing came to be routinely used in education. The 1945 legislation had been based on what was generally believed at the time about individual learning abilities. The then current premise was that state controlled distribution of resources was the most effective way of ensuring that appropriate education was provided for children of different levels of ability and that, to do that, children should be grouped, separated and allocated to the appropriate type of education provision (McPherson, 1993) based on assessment data.

Another dimension of such testing was that, in addition to identifying pupils who would benefit from either an academic or technical education, it also identified the inability to benefit from education. Based on the data generated from testing concepts of normality, and from that deviance, deficit and disability, were established and the segregation of children, based on normative testing, became accepted practice in education. An identified inability (termed as a 'handicap') was

attributed as a characteristic of an individual's pathology (Solity, 1992) and allocating children to a particular type of education based on an identified handicap was part of that system.

There was no place in such a paradigm for considering the adaptive capacities of individuals or for challenging the assumptions behind the social practices they seemed to justify. Conversely, such belief in the predictive capacity of normative testing supported a narrow view which gave great power to those individuals whose task it was to administer and interpret normative testing and make the decisions, arising from such data as to whether or not school education would be provided, for education, or the lack of it, would determine the role an individual could have in a society where literacy and numeracy were required to earn a living. While, as the 20th century progressed and there were changes in thinking about the way in which children with such handicaps might be educated so that, by 1955 it was established that "*arrangements would be made to include more children (with handicaps) in mainstream schools*" (SED, 1955) it was still within a legislative framework where the influence of the positivist paradigm continued to find acceptance. The separatist thinking of the time is apparent in legislation of the previous year, the Special Education Treatment (Scotland) Regulations, which introduced nine categories for disabled children: deafness; partial deafness; blindness; partial sightedness; mental handicap; epilepsy; speech defects; maladjustment and physical handicap (SED, 1954).

2.3 Development of social models of disability and education policy response

However, as part of changes in thinking about human rights in all spheres of society and a climate of increasing liberalisation in the 1960s, the discriminatory nature of education came to be questioned. The Primary Memorandum (SED, 1965), influenced by theories of child-centred learning, questioned the practice of categorising and segregating pupils and advocated teaching and learning methods which could meet the needs of pupils with a wide range of abilities, taking into account their age, aptitude and interests. The Education (Scotland) Act (1969) began to move away from the concept of a fixed, medical disability and articulated the view

that factors other than medical (e.g. social, psychological, educational, familial) should be taken into account when assessing a child's requirement to have special educational arrangements and also, that any decisions arising from such assessments should be subject to review and change. By 1974 the Education (Mentally Handicapped Children) Act (1974) established that no child could be considered to be uneducable or untrainable.

By the 1970s, data began to emerge from America to suggest that those who had been segregated on the basis of inferior intelligence could be enabled to achieve the same educational attainment as their peers (Solity, 1992), and that there was a high incidence of minority group members in the categories labelled as inferior intellectual ability. This led to questioning of whether the scientific epistemology on which such categorisation was based was actually value free (Barton and Tomlinson 1984; Tomlinson, 1982). It became increasingly acknowledged that there was not always an obvious link between a handicap and the type of education required. A child with a serious physically disabling condition could be intelligent and capable of learning from education in the way that it was normally provided – it was only the physical arrangements which may require some alteration. Also, children who had no physical or mental handicap could have social or emotional difficulties which prevented them from learning from education as it was normally provided. The view that labelling and categorising, rather than providing a benign system operating to benefit pupils with additional support needs, actually contributed to lack of equity for them has been very much influenced by Tomlinson (1982) who drew attention to the way in which learning difficulties are created by the social and education arrangements pupils are part of. Education can confer social mobility through the acquisition of skills, qualifications and occupational opportunities, but success in education requires social competences (ways of behaving; a knowledge and acceptance of the values and beliefs of the dominant discourse e.g. willingness to pass exams or prepare for employment; access to physical resources). Tomlinson noted that the majority of pupils who were identified as having special needs were in the lower social groups and maintained, that what that tells us is not that the lower social groups are predisposed to having deficits which create learning problems, but

that education is organised in such a way that only certain skills, values, attitudes and dispositions are supported and encouraged and, it is the lack of ability to acquire or display this which is interpreted as a learning difficulty.

In Clark, Dyson and Millward (1998) Ainscow notes that growing criticism of the within-child deficit model led to a greater focus on an 'interactive' view such as suggested by Tomlinson. This view acknowledges that difficulties with learning can arise as a mismatch between the arrangements put in place for learners and the actual conditions they would require in order to be able to learn effectively (Clark, Dyson and Millward, *ibid*). The *Warnock Report* (1978) and the HMI document "*The Education of Pupils with Learning Difficulties in Primary and Secondary Schools in Scotland*" (1978) reflect such a view and are considered to be the beginning of radical changes to the way additional support needs in Scotland were conceptualised and addressed. They established the expectation that, for most pupils, support could be provided, in mainstream settings rather than special school provision, by curriculum differentiation and support from specialist (learning support) teachers and the Warnock Report is regarded as marking the beginning of the end of the system of categorisation and allocation to different types of educational provision based on level and type of handicap. It did present a different way of thinking from a medical model of assessment and intervention, and offered a social model which acknowledged that learning problems need not be due to within-child factors, but that barriers to learning could be created by the curriculum – either its content or the way it was taught. An additional factor which made necessary changes to the thinking about the way special needs education was organised and delivered was that, due to advances in medicine, more children with severe or multiple handicaps were living longer and it was not always easy to fit them into an established category.

The report also introduced the concept of a continuum of special educational needs (SEN), to include a wide range of children, from those who had severe or complex needs, to those with general difficulties with learning. The term 'learning difficulties' was introduced: this was to describe all levels of SEN across the whole continuum.

Although the previous categories of ‘educationally subnormal’ and ‘mentally handicapped’ (applied in Scotland) were done away with, the paradigm of categorisation continued. Within the continuum of ‘learning difficulties’ the categories of *mild*, *moderate* and *severe* were introduced. The report went on to quantify that up to 20% of pupils may have SEN, at some point on the continuum, at some point in their school career and that, within that group, the 2% with the most severe or complex difficulties should have a Record of Needs to document the extent of their difficulties and how they should be addressed. The terminology and the beginnings of a move towards the inclusion of pupils with SEN in mainstream settings may have been radical at the time but the Warnock Report did not recommend the full inclusion of pupils with SEN in mainstream and supported the continued existence of special schools. While the intention may have been to establish that a significant proportion of pupils who had difficulties with learning did not require a different, ‘special’, educational provision but could, and should, be included in mainstream provision, by introducing a wide category to cover the whole range of barriers to learning, then pupils who did not have any kind of physical disability or intellectual impairment, were brought into what was identified as the ‘special needs group’ - a group previously made up of pupils with identified physical or cognitive disabilities. The report had acknowledged that pupils in this new, larger grouping may have difficulties with their learning caused by the curriculum or its delivery but, nevertheless, as has now been recognised, the identification and labelling of such pupils meant that they were perceived as, and treated as, different from their peers. While it did recommend changes to in-school practices by acknowledging that problems with learning could be created by circumstances around the child rather than be a consequence of individual pathology, and it took forward the idea of inclusion in that it advocated that a wide range of difficulties with learning should be addressed in mainstream settings, it did not challenge the viewpoint that categorisation and separation were required for effective teaching and it further confirmed any previously held understandings that some sort of specialist pedagogy, which was the domain of specialist teachers or specialist schools, was required.

In Scotland, the policy response to the changes to thinking of the time, an HMI document, *Educating Pupils with Learning Difficulties in Primary and Secondary Schools* (SED, 1978) reaffirmed the Warnock view that the curriculum could be the source of learning difficulties but went further than Warnock to suggest that up to 50% (as opposed to Warnock's 20%) of the school population could require support for a learning difficulty at some point in their school career. It advised that there should be less focus on individual deficits and more attention paid to ensuring that there was not a mismatch between pupils' needs and the learning arrangements in place for them. Although the report had stated that the school, and the class teacher were responsible for creating educational experiences which would meet the needs of all pupils, it introduced learning support teachers, whose role it was to focus on supporting mainstream class teachers, through co-operative teaching and consultancy to ensure that the curriculum or its delivery did not create barriers to learning. This continued to reinforce the thinking from the previous paradigm, that it required the specialist knowledge of other than the class teacher to be able identify and appropriately provide for the needs of pupils with learning difficulties. Subsequent legislation and guidance has further developed the notion that children who have learning difficulties have rights as well as needs and the 1980 Education Act (Scotland) required local authorities to provide adequate and efficient provision for pupils with special educational needs. It built on the recommendations of the HMI 1978 document (SED, 1978) to define special needs and learning difficulties. It also took forward the idea that some pupils with learning difficulties or special needs could be educated in mainstream schools but continued to reflect a separatist perspective that educational provision for pupils with special needs could be in either mainstream or special schools.

The continuing commitment to improve conditions for children was articulated at international level in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) where the goal was set that all children be enabled to achieve the fullest possible social integration and opportunities for individual development. This line of thought was developed in The Salamanca Statement (1994) which called for governments to implement the necessary philosophical and systemic changes to

facilitate the development of inclusive education systems. Britain is one of the governments which has signed up to the goals of The Salamanca Statement and these goals are reflected in its social policy (British, and now also, Scottish). The Children (Scotland) Act (1995) stated that children with, or affected by, disability should have the right to as normal a life as possible. The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act (2000) introduced the right for every child to an education which would develop their personality, talents, aptitudes and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential, and it also established the presumption of mainstream education for all children. Current legislation, the Education (Additional Support For Learning) (Scotland) Act (2004) introduced duties which extend beyond the previous requirement for authorities to make general provision and it states that authorities and schools must provide all children and young people with whatever support they require to benefit from education. The Act also places the duty on authorities to identify and keep under review pupils who would come into such a category. As a consequence of the changes in legislation as set out above, in Scotland today the legislative position is that all children are entitled to an education which will enable them to fulfil their potential and many school pupils with conditions which affect their physical or cognitive abilities are included in mainstream education. Yet, research evidence suggests that the legacy of past thinking and practices is difficult to change and can still exert influence on current practice (Barton, in Clough, 1998). In the next section I will consider the evidence which offers explanations as to why this happens and how it relates to social justice.

2.4 The continuing influence of positivism

The methodology of the positivist paradigm had created and sustained a particular mind-set in that it restricted philosophical debate by only asking questions which could be answered within the definitions of the scientific discourse (Hammersley, 1995). Accepting that there was a stable, quantifiable social reality led to the development of the concepts, and definition, of what constituted normality for human behaviour and, as a consequence, to explain that which did not fit the arrived at definition, the concepts of abnormality and deviance. This, I believe, has given rise to the enduring acceptance of segregatory and exclusionary practices in education

and the development of systems whereby children are categorised by their disability and then allocated to appropriate education provision which could include alternative pedagogical approaches, physical arrangements or even location to a special school. This was referred to as a medical model of disability which attributed a learning difficulty to an individual's pathology and that such children were different, in terms of learning needs, from their peers. Such thinking gave rise to the generally accepted principle that to address any identified problem associated with a child having a difficulty with learning, the emphasis was on finding solutions such as alternative teaching approaches or specialist settings, the goal of this being, as far as possible, to normalise the child (Thomas and Loxley, 2001). This was what policies expected of teachers and thus practice arrangements to enable this to happen were developed, became established and were accepted.

Warnock marked a move away from traditional thinking and acknowledged the social model of learning difficulties, that they could be created, not by within-child factors but by a range of circumstances surrounding a child (e.g. social, emotional, familial, curricular), and that learning problems could be removed by changing the circumstances. It did not, however, remove systems of identification, labelling and separation and the medical model and notions of 'normality' and 'deficit' continued. Research suggests that the continuing influence of the medical model made possible a tendency for those pupils categorised as having special needs or learning difficulties to be regarded as a separate group. In their study of one Scottish region Allan, Brown and Munn (1991) found that the way in which secondary teachers tended to conceptualise learning difficulties, by categorising them as having either short or long-term difficulties, determined how these difficulties would be addressed. Short-term difficulties were generally attributed to environmental factors and able to be addressed by class teachers, while long-term difficulties were ascribed to within-child factors and thought to require the specialist intervention of learning support staff. The practices which developed around this led to isolated ways of working (e.g. individually differentiated work prepared by learning support staff) and the persistence of a separatist, within-child deficit model of learning (Munn, 1994).

In 2000, a comprehensive international review of research on teachers' attitudes to including pupils with additional support needs in mainstream classes (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002) again found that teachers, generally, felt less able, without further resources ('resources' taken to include in-class support from specialist teachers) to include pupils with what they regarded as the more complex needs in their classrooms. The perception identified above, that mainstream teachers tended to conceptualise pupils with long-term difficulties with their learning as requiring a specialist pedagogy that they did not have the skills or knowledge to provide has been identified as a lasting trend (Thomas and Loxley, 2001) and was also a feature which emerged in my discussions with teachers I interviewed in my own small-scale research project (Herd, 2002).

So while it may have been the intention of policy directives to create inclusive arrangements which respond to the needs of all learners, the evidence above supports a view that the practices which are currently in place are still influenced by the thinking of the past where categorisation and labelling leads to groups of pupils considered to have learning difficulties being treated as if they were homogenous, static and treated differently from their peers. Influences on teachers to continue to categorise and separate pupils with additional support needs can be found in policy and guidance where the practice of identifying and labelling those pupils who have learning difficulties, as a separate group and for different treatment, has continued. This is reflected in the ways recent policy and guidance, which influences teachers' understandings and determines their practice, has defined learning difficulties (and now additional support needs). The key documents for teachers which relate to this, in the period from 1978 -2004 I refer to below.

As referred to previously, the conceptualisation of learning difficulty can be traced back to the beginnings of capitalism where industrialisation and the need for a skilled workforce led to the expansion of education and those who could not learn in the education system which was intended to impart knowledge, skills and attributes to enable individuals to take on a role in the workplace were labelled and separated.

The medical model of identifying, labelling (and then separating) began to be replaced by a social model and there were moves towards more inclusive practice after Warnock in 1978. Current understandings now acknowledge how a learning difficulty comes into being when failure to meet a curriculum requirement is identified (Clough and Barton, 1995), and that as such it is relative to the normative judgment of the dominant culture. However, between the beginnings of new conceptualisations and understandings in 1978 and current thinking, although the terms used to describe pupils who have difficulties with learning and the practices in place to support them have altered, there is evidence, in policy and guidance over that period, of thinking which continued to support practices of labelling and separating.

The key guidance document of the immediate post Warnock period was “*Educating Pupils with Learning Difficulties in Primary and Secondary Schools*” (SED 1978). By identifying a percentage of the population (up to 50%) who would likely require support for a learning difficulty at some time, and introducing a new category of teachers in mainstream schools (support for learning), it reinforced the notion that some pupils were different, in their learning needs, from their peers, and that they required teaching input from a specialist teacher. It has been noted (Allan, Brown and Munn, 1991) that the 1978 SED document required of mainstream teachers that they should be able to provide appropriate learning experiences for pupils who had learning difficulties but there was little critical appraisal of how that could be achieved, and lack of specific advice given to teachers regarding pedagogy and practice they might adopt. Thus there was no support for teachers to move away from the practices and understandings of labelling and separating to which they were accustomed.

Another key guidance document, the “*Manual of Good Practice in Special Educational Needs*” (SOEID, 1998), continued to uphold the viewpoint that pupils having difficulties with learning could be identified in a way that set them apart from their peers. It provided tautological definitions of ‘special needs’ and ‘learning difficulties’ by stating that a young person had special needs if they had a learning

difficulty which required some form of specialised provision, and referred to the following definitions of learning difficulty:

a) where a child or young person has greater difficulty learning than the majority at the same age or (has) a disability which prevents effective use of educational facilities generally provided (Education (Scotland) Act, 1980)

b) where the child or young person requires additional arrangements to be able to access the curriculum (Circular 4/96).

So, a child or young person was considered to have special needs if they had a learning difficulty which required special arrangements, and a learning difficulty was considered to exist where specialised arrangements were required. This illustrates the relativity of the terms used and how a learning difficulty comes into existence when those with the power to name it do so, based on normative factors (the abilities of the majority at the same age) and variable factors (how much support an individual needs to access the curriculum).

The most recent legislation, the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act, 2004 has allowed such thinking to continue. It replaced the term special needs with additional support needs and defined an additional support need to exist when:

“a child or young person is, or is likely to be, unable without the provision of additional support, to benefit from the school education provided” (Section 1).

The act established that the population identified as requiring additional support to be provided ranges from those with the most severe, complex, long-term needs to those with short-term needs arising from a range of circumstances. The intention of this change of terminology was to expand on the term special needs to include children and young people whose needs for support can arise from a range of factors (including short-term social, emotional or environmental circumstances). This, latest, definition is still relativistic and creates a potentially very large, fluid category where pupils can be identified as having an additional need based on very transient circumstances. Contrary to its intention to create inclusive learning and practices which support the educational progress of all pupils at all times and in all contexts, it

reinforces separatist thinking and the persisting belief that those who have additional support needs require to be placed in an identified category. There is already evidence of lack of clarity in relation to the terms ‘special needs’ and ‘learning difficulties’ which have often been used co-terminously by teachers and to refer to a population of pupils with very diverse needs, from long-term complex and/or multiple physical, intellectual or medical conditions, to short-term problems which could be addressed through modification of curriculum delivery arrangements, while the term ‘special needs’ has also been associated with those pupils whose needs are more severe or who have physical disabilities (Allan, Brown and Munn, 1991) and, in the UK, the term disability is a further category within the general term special needs (Clark, Dyson and Millward, 1998). Lack of clarity about what the terminology means is not just a semantic issue, but has implications of how pupils have been conceptualised and categorised by teachers. It would seem it is possible that, by increasing the number of pupils who can be included in the now re-named ‘additional support needs’ grouping, that even more pupils may be perceived and labelled as different and requiring specialist pedagogies provided by specialist staff.

In addition to the persistence of separatist thinking influencing teachers’ understandings and the practice arrangements for pupils with additional support needs, there are other forces which exert their influence on maintaining the status quo and continuing to accept arrangements which treat one group of pupils differently from their peers. Benjamin (2002) noted that it may be the interests of teachers being served by the continuing practice of labelling and separating pupils with additional support needs when, as referred to in the previous chapter, they are under pressure to produce success. When it is identified that a certain pupil (or pupils) will have problems producing the outcome which counts as success, there is a safety net for teachers if it is accepted that the problem lies with the pupil(s) – and also a safety net for the schools and local authorities who are held to account for achieving performance targets as measures of success. Within such a context, while it may be understandable why it happens, where risk of failure means pupils may be marginalised to groups where educational success is not an expected outcome and therefore not sought by the teachers of such groups, this is not socially just and is

also an example of unequal relations and where there is classification of a weaker group (labelled pupils) by a more powerful one (teachers, or educational managers) (Tomlinson, 1982).

Hegarty, in Clough, (1998) draws attention to the fact that there are others too who may have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. For those involved in providing special education outside mainstream, there will be issues of financial investment to consider - in buildings and in careers, which may influence thinking for, if systems of categorisation and segregation did not exist there would be no need for special schools. Individuals who work within special education (in establishments separate from mainstream provision or attached to mainstream schools) or those who work in additional support needs in mainstream schools, will have developed a set of skills related to their own particular contexts and they may, for personal reasons, be reluctant to see any changes to the system if it might lead to them not having a role or they, and others, may hold a philosophical commitment to segregated education provision. Government, local authority and school budget managers responsible for mainstream education may also be disposed to segregative practice continuing as the *Moving to Mainstream* (Audit Scotland 2003) put a very high figure on the cost of inclusion.

The normative, segregative practices of the 1940s and 1950s had been considered an acceptable means of allocating state resources and providing appropriate education across the whole school age population. As understandings of learning difficulties changed, the reliance on a medical model of within-child differences was questioned and replaced by a social model which recognised how social practices can create barriers to learning and the focus was on removing them. Currently, policy directives are informed by an individual rights model which aspires to make available, to all children, the level of educational opportunity and support required to enable full social integration and educational development. While although some aspects of practice are now very different from those of the first half of the 20th century, there is evidence to suggest that a medical model, which supports separatist, segregative

practice and a within-child model of learning difficulties, still influences the organisation of education and teachers' thinking.

2.5 Power relations and the persistence of segregative practice

That the prevailing orthodoxy in conceptualising how education is provided for pupils who have additional support needs is still much influenced by a medical model, despite what is now acknowledged about how practices based on this model have contributed to the reproduction of social inequalities (Tomlinson, 1982 and 1985; Rustemier, 2002), raises the question as to why recent policy agendas, which have tried to take forward firstly a social model of learning difficulties and, more recently, a rights based one, have not succeeded in changing such practices. It has been suggested (Hegarty, in Clough, 1998) that there is, at philosophical, financial and legislative levels, a continuing commitment to segregative practice where models of education provision, budgetary arrangements and also some individuals support, or have a vested interest in, maintaining the existence of special schools or, as in the context of this thesis, a separate category of pupils in mainstream schools. Foucault's views on power relations (Danaher, Schirato and Webb, 2000) provide a perspective which offers an explanation as to why, despite policy drivers to change practice, and an academic critique which argues that much of current practice is antithetical to the extending of democratic ideals and providing social justice for young people, such practices still persist.

Foucault (1975) in Danaher, Schirato and Webb (ibid, p65) maintains that the organising principles of post -Enlightenment society, based on ideas of reason, justice and equality, in seeking to create order and predictability, required systems for "*analysing, controlling, regulating and defining the human body*". These systems have taken the form of institutions such as family, agencies of law and social care, universities and schools and they create discourses which shape how individuals come to understand the social world, how they respond to it and how they behave. The acceptance by individuals of the views, values and expectations of these discourses gives them regulatory power over individuals. In Foucault's analysis the power of social systems to influence thinking and behaviour is called 'biopower' and

the effect of the workings of biopower creates individuals as ‘docile bodies’ who not only accept the regulatory effects of biopower but, to maintain the norms of the discourses they accept, they actively seek to conform to them. Allan (1999) draws a parallel between the disciplinary mechanisms of prisons and educational practice where the effects of power and control construct individuals as subjects in two ways. They are subject to those who are in power and who administer and organise regimes of control and restraint and as subjects tied to their own identity by their conscience and view of themselves.

Applying such a Foucauldian perspective to education, the systems of control and regulation which support order and predictability can be seen in the practices which have been developed to identify and support pupils with additional support needs. These regulatory systems (e.g. assessment procedures; curriculum design and delivery) have the power to determine what is considered ‘normal’ and, by extension, what is not normal and therefore, are able to define the standard by which the identities of those who are deemed to have additional support needs are created, accepted and maintained through hierarchies of systems of observation (which Foucault referred to as ‘the gaze’). As I have contended previously, current systems are still based largely on the orthodoxy of a medical model of learning difficulties and separatist thinking. Foucault’s perspective suggests that, within Scottish education, acknowledged to be meritocratic and hierarchical, such forces of orthodoxy would be difficult to change.

With reference to my own experience of practices in relation to identifying and separating pupils considered to have additional support needs, I now consider the ways in which they can be seen not to work in the best interests of pupils and also how the power relations and forces of orthodoxy support this.

2.6 Power relations and in-school practices

While I was working as Principal Teacher of Support For Learning in a mainstream secondary school, I was aware that I was part of a system of practices which made assumptions about what pupils needed and I see now how that could be understood as Foucault's 'biopower' in operation. I accepted and colluded with teachers' views of what was required for pupils. I did develop an awareness of the fact that the practices I was involved in supporting seemed not to work well for the pupils they were intended to help as I was able to observe what seemed to be negative effects such as their over-dependence on others for support, non-compliance with measures put in place to help them, and often no development of transferable coping skills. While such awareness led me to question the extent to which what we were engaged in doing was actually benefiting the pupils, it was not, at that time, required practice to engage in dialogue with pupils about what was being done and what could be better done to enable their learning needs to be addressed to their satisfaction. It was regarded as good practice to seek the agreement of pupils about support arrangements which had been agreed with teachers, lack of time often meant it was not prioritised and it was not a requirement that pupils agreed with decisions made about them, by teachers, for them to be implemented. An attempt now, to account for the reasons why, despite my concerns that the practices we were employing often were not acceptable to the pupils nor seemed to be particularly effective, I accepted the dominant vision (that is, that it was the role of teachers alone to determine the need for, and the nature of, support given to pupils) is set out below.

As I have discussed above, my personal motivation in teaching was underpinned by the intention to help pupils to do and/or feel better in the context of their secondary school learning experience, but, as a large part of the remit of a support for learning teacher (as defined in legislation and policy guidelines since Warnock in 1978) is to work collaboratively with teaching staff in their classrooms and influence practice through consultancy to staff, there was also the need to maintain good relationships with staff while engaging in the process of identifying aspects of practice which might be changed to better serve the needs of those pupils with difficulties with their learning. The evidence previously considered, that the Scottish education system

tended to be characterised by conservatism, an academic bias and underpinned by a belief that the existing system worked well (Scotland, 1969), helps to account for how changes to practice in the post-Warnock era, where class teachers were required to be responsible for devising and delivering a curriculum experience suitable for pupils with learning difficulties, would not be either easily or quickly achieved. The 1980s also saw, for teachers, the development of systems of accountability which included audit mechanisms (such as target setting for pupil's attainment, inspection regimes measured against pre-specified performance criteria) and pressure to produce data which evidenced success. The additional demands on their professional skills by the introduction of pupils with learning difficulties in their classes came at a time when the professional autonomy of teachers was already being challenged by performativity regimes.

Some of the difficulties a teacher can experience in the role of change agent (such as part my SFL responsibility was) within a system where a tendency to conservatism has been acknowledged and in a period where changes to the practices and roles of teachers have been introduced, can be accounted for by considering the complex processes involved in any proposals to change practice where the subjective realities of all involved, and the ever-changing relationships between people and circumstances can create uncertainty and conflict (Fullan, 1993; Land, 2001). I acknowledge that other factors may also have inhibited me from acting on my observations that the needs of the pupils were not always being best served by the practices I was engaged in. I have found feminist perspectives such as suggested by Noddings (1986) and Sargisson (1996) offers some helpful insight into my aspiration to enter into relationships with the pupils which acknowledged and responded to their subjective realities and they have helped also to explain the difficulty I experienced in challenging the policies and practices within the school where an orthodox, hierarchical, top-down view of organisational arrangements persisted and power was held and expressed by the dominant group – the school managers, which included subject specialist heads of department. Again a Foucauldian perspective provides a level of understanding of the processes at work here. My own preferences, to want to prioritise good relationships with staff and maintain a caring role with

pupils, were not entirely consistent with the norms of a system which is primarily concerned with promoting academic success. I did not always accept the role of 'docile body' but often questioned the existing arrangements in support of what I believed to be the rights of pupils with additional support needs. This is consistent with Foucault's analysis which contends that biopower produces resistance, but such resistance and challenge is not readily accepted by those whose power is being resisted or questioned. Neither did my own status within the school management hierarchy - a female, with low institutional management status and working with pupils who tended to be marginalised in such system (Gilligan, 1982; Paechter, 2000) make such a challenge acceptable to those in positions of higher power and influence.

Apple (1982) maintains that individuals, in their roles within educational institutions both accept and promote the practices within these institutions because they are products of these practices and their way(s) of understanding have been determined by these practices. Foucault's theory of how power works at an institutional and at personal level helps me to understand why I was not aware of my own role in maintaining a situation I was trying to change. As a product of, and an expected proponent of, a system (mainstream secondary education) which accepts and encourages conformity to existing social norms as expressed through academic success within the current curriculum arrangements I was, and I was expected to be, part of the traditional power/organisational arrangements. Viewing events from perspective can help to account for difficulties associated with seeking the views of, and then offering an opportunity to exercise their agency to, those pupils already identified as being unable to achieve success at mastering the practices and thereby not conforming to the social norms the education system seeks to perpetuate. While I had thought I was helping pupils to do better I can understand how attempts to change practice could also be viewed as a challenge to existing power relationships and considered disruptive to the system which seeks to preserve itself. Such forces of orthodoxy, while they were not particularly visible to me then, nor did I seek to problematise them, I was aware of them enough to be disinclined to challenge the status quo by placing the voice of pupils above, or even equal to, that of teachers and

managers. Developing such an understanding has alerted me to how other teachers working with pupils who have additional support needs may experience similar difficulties.

2.7 Overview of support for learning practices at local authority level

It is acknowledged (Ozga, 2000) that while current policy and practice in education are driven by global (travelling) policy imperatives deriving from pressures for nation states to be able to compete in a global economy there is evidence, including from Scotland, of local cultures and practices as mediating forces which challenge and change global policies so that they reflect the particular local circumstances. I previously considered evidence of such mediating effects, looking at how embedded culture and practices in Scotland produced different outcomes from England in response to changes to the governance of education since the 1980s. A significant mediating feature within the Scottish context, since devolution in 1999, has been the Scottish Parliament. The Scottish Nationalist Government, elected in 2007, has continued to adopt arrangements with local authorities different from elsewhere in Britain. These arrangements are set out in *The Concordat between the Scottish Government and local government* (Scottish Government, 2007). As part of their current budgetary policy, in exchange for a freeze on council tax, an arrangement which further enables localised mediation of policy allows each local authority to enter into an agreement called, a Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) which allows them to set programmes which, although they must relate to national targets for improvement, reflect local circumstances, needs and priorities.

To better understand how the practices within the authority in which my study is based have been shaped, and to consider how they impact on pupils with additional support needs, it is necessary to provide some information about the authority and the plans and targets within its SOA.

The local authority in which the study for this thesis is based is relatively small and *Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation* (SIMD) shows that it is one of the least deprived areas in the country. In terms of education attainment the authority, within

the current discourse which sets a high value on exam performance and improvements in measured attainment, is considered successful. In terms of Standard Grade and Higher passes it performs above national and comparator authorities' averages. Both of the schools in this study, when referenced against national trends, perform overall better or much better than other schools with similar characteristics (*Report to Local Authority Education Committee, 2009*).

The arrangements for identifying and supporting the learning of pupils with additional support needs are set out in guidance document for schools (*Framework for Meeting Additional Support Needs, 2004*). The systems in place include a staged system for identification and support (*Staged Assessment and Intervention (SAI)*) which, when a concern is raised about a pupil, by any professional working with the pupil or by a parent, an assessment process is initiated, the pupil placed in one of three categories and appropriate support arrangements identified. Abbreviated details of the categories are:

Stage 1: Universal assessment and intervention

Assessment is an integral element of the universal services – health and education - accessed by all children and young people. Public health nurses routinely undertake developmental and health surveillance checks as children progress to adulthood. Detailed assessment information is routinely and regularly collected for children and young people as they progress through the education system. When a need for support is identified - either by a child/young person, a parent, or by an adult working with the child - some form of assessment is undertaken – however simply or briefly. Measures to address needs identified are discussed with the child and parent. Advice may be sought from other colleagues or referral may be made to a more targeted service provided by health or education - e.g. speech and language therapist, support for learning teacher.

Stage 2: Additional Assessment and Intervention

Additional assessment and intervention of the Staged Assessment and Intervention framework at this stage aims to plan and co-ordinate a multi agency response to concerns identified by assessment and intervention initiated by a universal agency, but not adequately addressed by it. This equates to a range of existing multi agency assessment and planning processes for children and young people – e.g. a Looked After at Home Review, Child in Need meeting, Individual Education Planning, a multi agency report and action plan for children referred to a Children's Hearing.

Stage 3: Intensive Assessment and Intervention

Children and young people who require *intensive* assessment and intervention have enduring complex and multiple additional support needs requiring detailed planning. Their needs for care and protection may have to be looked at under Lothian Child Protection Guidelines or they may require

- an individualised funding package on a long term basis to sustain placement in their local community school;
- day placement in specialist provision catering for specific learning needs arising from a range of cognitive, communication, physical / sensory impairments and /or social, emotional and behavioural difficulties;
- placement in a foster home or on a residential basis in specialist provision catering for specific learning and care needs arising from a range of cognitive, communication, physical / sensory impairments and /or social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and offering integrated education and care on a 24 hour day basis.

To support schools to ensure that every pupil has access to an appropriate curriculum the authority employs or outsources specialist staff. Specialist teachers in the following areas are available to provide support and advice as required in matters pertaining to dyslexia, hearing impairment, English as an additional language, behaviour support, autism and related communication difficulties. Systems also exist for schools to refer to or consult for advice associated health professionals (therapists and mental health workers).

As it is the relationship between pupils and teachers in schools which is the focus of my study, it is also necessary to provide some information about each school and to make clear the in-school systems which are in place. Each school has a support for learning teacher (or teachers) whose primary role is to address issues relating to pupils with additional support needs associated with cognitive, physical or social problems and each school has separate staffing and accommodation for pupils who have behaviour difficulties. It is practice in each school, in line with the authority's policy, for support for learning staff to liaise with the associated primaries, in the year prior to transfer to secondary, so that information can be collected to inform planning for any support which individual pupils with additional support needs are likely to require at secondary school.

The SOA contains targets to build on current academic achievement and also, while the local area is one of overall economic advantage, there are targets in the SOA which also acknowledge that there are some inequalities relating to income and educational attainment for some communities, families and individuals which it intends to address. The targets set for education are:

- improve attainment in examinations for all young people, particularly the lowest performing 20%
- all children will, in reading and maths achieve Level B by the end of P4, Level D by the end of P7 and Level E by the end of S2 – unless they have specific learning difficulties or severe or complex needs

(Integrated Children's Service Plan, 2008-2011)

Other targets relate to social justice by tackling the significant inequalities in society and improving the quality of life for those who are disadvantaged while others relate to building human capital by creating safe, inclusive, supportive communities, facilitating young people to become responsible citizens, improving the health and well being of vulnerable or disadvantaged groups, and linking improved educational outcomes to economic potential.

2.8 Summary

The tensions between the goals of reducing inequalities while at the same time improving educational attainment have been noted previously, and a possible reading to the targets in the SOA is that despite stated intentions to tackle inequalities they continue to be reproduced. Apple's (1982) argument explains how if targets link educational outcomes to the political and economic agendas of government then education becomes part of the social apparatus which reproduces the existing social order. Pupils are required to be equipped with skills and dispositions which perpetuate that order and by identifying and supporting what is regarded as success schools perpetuate inequalities – for where there is a category of 'success' there are also categories of 'failure' and 'deviance'. This is exemplified by the identification of the category 'the lowest performing 20%'. Such a category is relative in that generally the local authority is considered to be very successful in terms measured education performance and pupils are identified for this category not necessarily because they have any known difficulties with learning, but because 80% of pupils do better than they do. Their failure is created and defined by the success of others. A further example of the creation and perpetuation of inequalities are the authority's targets for literacy and numeracy. They link to the overall human capital capacity building goal by seeking to improve individuals' capacities for sustained employment and thus, their contribution to the national and, in this case, local economic project. That they exclude some pupils raises concerns for me about what is being conveyed about those pupils who, for whatever reason, do not manage to achieve such targets.

This chapter has shown that there is evidence of the effects of positivist thinking which informed practices in relation to pupils who have additional support needs in the 19th century (then they were called special needs or even handicaps) continuing to influence current practice. There has been movement from conceptualisations based on medical models of within-child deficits to those which are based children's rights, inclusion and the social construction of learning difficulties, but even current policy, the 2004 Additional Support for Learning Act, requires pupils who have additional support needs to be identified as such. The arrangements and practices in place perpetuate power relations which reflect the meritocratic and hierarchical thinking which is an acknowledged tendency in Scottish education. In the context of the current performativity culture which has resulted in a focus on exam success and achieving targets, there are possible implications for pupils who do not, or it thought may not, meet set targets. As discussed in Chapter 1, there are possible consequences for pupils labelled and categorised because they are thought to be less able than their peers that they may be marginalised or less time is given to them and this is socially unjust.

In a culture where exam success and achieving targets have become proxy measures of a school, or a teacher's success then, as noted by Gewirtz (2002), Benjamin (2002) and Tomlinson (1982), there are possible implications for pupils who do not, or it is thought they may not, meet the set targets. As discussed in Chapter 1, possible consequences for pupils labelled and categorised because they are thought to be less able than their peers are that their difficulties are ascribed to a within-pupil deficit, they are marginalised from the other pupils (who are destined for examination success), or that less time is given to teaching them. To answer these questions and to find out if pupils with additional support needs are being provided with educational experiences which are socially just I believe it is necessary to obtain the views of the pupils and their teachers. In chapters 3 and 4 I set out how I collected their views, how I analysed the data and what the analysis found.

Chapter 3 Method and methodology

3.1 Introduction

It is now over thirty years after the Warnock Report and the HMI document, *Educating Pupils with Learning Difficulties in Primary and Secondary Schools* (SED, 1978) which brought changes to the conceptualisation of the learning needs of pupils and how these needs should be addressed and there has recently been a new policy directive which brings further changes, the (Additional Support For Learning Act (2004). There are also wider social policy agendas which seek to promote social inclusion through education. At this time I am interested to explore the perception of pupils and their teachers about current practices which are in place in mainstream setting for pupils who have additional support needs. I do this because I believe that pupils are generally powerless in the context of school arrangements where decisions are made for and about them and will consider what insights the views of pupils might provide to inform policymakers and practitioners about how teaching and learning practices might be better organised to support them. In this chapter I set out the influences and assumptions which led to my choice of area for study in this thesis and the methods I used to carry it out. I will also reflect on what were the strengths/limitations of the methods I used.

3.2 Feminism, voice and social justice

The research reported here which obtains the views of pupils and their teachers is set within the context of current political and policy directives articulated in recent legislation which places statutory obligation on local authorities to provide appropriate mainstream placements for the full range of pupil needs and abilities and to consult with pupils and, where appropriate, take their views into account (Children Scotland Act, 1995; Standards in Scotland's Schools (etc) Act, 2000; Additional Support For Learning (Scotland) Act, 2004). However, my interest developed initially out of my own practice in the early stages of my career as an (English) teacher. As I have previously set out in the introduction to this thesis I had aspired to be able to contribute to social justice by provide learning experiences which would

enable the pupils I taught to be able to achieve the best possible benefit from education, in terms of formal qualifications and skills for life beyond school. As part of that I believed that the pupils I taught should be given the opportunity to articulate their thoughts within the classroom and I was disposed both to listen to them and support them to develop the skills required for them to do that.

What I did was framed by my understandings of the time (and was before the culture of performativity which requires activities undertaken to be linked in some way to a measurable outcome) and one of the approaches I adopted was to apply what was then termed a rational problem solving approach (Rowntree, 1982) to my work. This involved applying an ongoing cycle of identifying the purpose of what I was teaching; designing learning experiences to match that purpose; evaluating what was achieved, and applying what was learned from the evaluation to improve subsequent learning experiences. I realise now that such a model of teaching and learning is a very narrow one and one where the power and control resided with me but, by including the views of the pupils as part of the evaluation process, I was made aware of how useful a contribution pupils can make to the evaluation of teaching and learning. Their views, as I remember, were freely given and could be disarmingly honest, but they presented a view of events of which I otherwise would not have been aware. Although I was not reflecting on my work systematically from a research informed perspective (Schon, 1983) as I would come to do later, I was alerted to what I perceived to be the potential of dialogue with pupils about their learning to be able to inform practice and contribute to good working relationships which seemed to support learning. I acknowledge that the consultation I undertook with pupils was very small scale and was within the existing power relations of the working arrangements of the school for, as I have stated previously, I was not aware of the effects and implications of these at the time.

Since the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) established that children had rights to participate in all matters concerning them there has been International attention how to develop pupil perspectives to develop educational

processes. One of the themes addressed by Cambridge University's Learning and Teaching Research Project is devoted to issues in relation to consulting with pupils:

*"based on the premise that schools should reflect
the democratic structures in society at large"*

(Flutter and Rudduck, 2004, p135).

In Newsletter 3 of the above project Consulting Pupils About Teaching and Learning: Consulting Young People in Schools (2003), Flutter and Rudduck suggest that, while consultation can be used to generate data about what works best in terms of helping pupils to attain as part of serving the needs of the performativity agenda, it can also provide positive benefits for the pupils. It has the capacity to help pupils feel included and can also help them to understand the wider contexts of their concerns and the decision making processes around them. Noyes (2005), noting the caveats in relation to it being used as a means to an end in the performativity agenda and that it can perpetuate existing power relations by encouraging pupils to engage with educational processes they might otherwise reject, maintains that consultation also has transformative powers to:

*"challenge powerful assumptions and practices that
maintain educational hierarchies and social injustice"*

(p 540).

It is its potential to improve social justice for pupils which engages and sustains my interest. In my most recent experience as a teacher, in a support for learning capacity in a mainstream secondary school over a period of twelve years, I had become increasingly disappointed in three key aspects of my role. Firstly, I had felt that I was unable, within some subject areas in the school, to effect any noticeable change in respect of organisational and/or teaching practices which seemed to marginalise pupils with difficulties in learning. Secondly, I was often unable to help pupils achieve success (such as was measured by academic attainment criteria, either within the 5-14 system or by SQA examinations), and thirdly, I was also unable to prevent pupils developing perceptions of themselves as 'failures'. I wanted to find out why this was happening and what could be done to make things better for them and saw research which explored their viewpoints as a way to do this.

My ontological viewpoint, which leads me to want to find out how to better influence arrangements help pupils overcome difficulties with learning, has been informed by my own experience, and observations, of social relations which have led me to develop a view of social reality that it is structured in a way which unequally privileges and accords power to men, and that those not in positions of power (e.g. women, poor people, children, old people, people with disabilities and some ethnic groupings) experience inequality and oppression. My view is that this is wrong and that I think it is desirable to question, and hopefully to change in some way, those power relations which seem to me to be unequal and oppressive. It was my hope that my research would be able to in some way advance the arrangements for pupils for their benefit and not, as has been a criticism of research in the field of disability rights (Oliver, 1992), claim to be emancipatory but be more concerned with organisational efficiency rather than changing values.

The methodology, that is the reasoning behind the choice of all the aspects of the methods I have chosen to use (Clough and Nutbrown, 2002), reflects that view.

My thinking, and understanding of the social world, has been influenced by traditions of feminist inquiry which acknowledge that the female voice has been marginalised from social and cultural life and that this is reflected in research practice (May, 1993) and, from that, notions of society are based on unexamined assumptions which are then represented in theories about society:

“Theories of the social world and practices of research are androcentric. What we call science is not based upon universal criteria which are value free, but upon male norms and, in particular, the mythical separation of reason (men) and emotion (women).”

(ibid, p13)

Informed by such thinking, which rejects the traditional model of theories of knowledge in Western society and the notion that they were rational and neutral, I have come to agree with a view postulated that

“all knowledge produced is in someone’s interests so all knowledge is generated from positions of power/powerlessness”

(Skeggs, 1995, p50).

Feminist writers have drawn attention to the idea that the absence of the female voice from social and cultural life has led to the socially constructed media of language and science, as they have been based on masculine conceptions of knowledge and what constitutes reality and truth (Gilligan, 1982), only being able to provide a partial understanding of social life. However, they also advocate that it is both possible and desirable to change social theory through research which examines the traditional masculine/feminine representations (Harding, 1987). Such research attempts to arrive at understandings of social relations which reject a view which values reason above emotion and which privileges masculine norms (Irigaray, 1974), and requires that research practices used do not merely reflect a phallogocentric perspective of the social world as is represented in the traditional, totalising classical epistemologies, but that they make possible that the voices of all groups and individuals can be heard and thereby the orthodox, masculine understandings can be challenged and make other understandings possible (Kristeva, 1981). The broad view of feminism taken by hooks (2000), that is not just about gender inequality, but about ending oppression which arises as a consequence of the dominance of patriarchal thinking in general provides, for me, a bridge between the influences of feminist traditions and my orientation to research which is influenced by ideas of social justice. In this research I am concerned with two groups (pupils with learning difficulties and their teachers) who I believe to be marginalised and silenced by the patriarchal systems of power relations in schools. It is my intention, therefore, to adopt methods which will allow the pupils and their teachers the opportunity to speak of their understandings while also seeking to avoid androcentricity and take into account a view of the social world where the influences of gender relations and the suppression of difference are acknowledged.

The feminist paradigm which influences my research challenges and rejects epistemologies which claim to be able to know, in a neutral way, the social world and hold that such claims cannot be made because such accounts reflect only a partial view, which privileges some and marginalises others. However, accepting that this is true leads me then to accept that my own knowledge also can only be partial, and I can only understand things from the situation which I am in. Although there is no one method or strategy for feminist research (Brayton, 1997) a feminist epistemological viewpoint maintains that I do not seek to develop knowledge or describe events in an detached, neutral way, for it is not possible to do so, but that I take into account that the culture or society the research is conducted in and the organisations or individuals who have an investment in the outcome of the research all impact on decisions made pertaining to the research process (ibid). In my current and previous roles within education I was, and remain part of, the hierarchical, controlling social order I am researching. Therefore, I recognise that it is necessary for me to be as reflexive and open as possible about how that has affected my understandings and assumptions and decisions about the social relations I am researching.

My understanding of social relations in schools which have led me to conclude that arrangements for pupils who have difficulties with learning contribute to them being marginalised have developed from observations over time, in the schools where I have worked. These observations led me to conclude that:

- teachers tended, generally, to rely on support for learning staff being present in the classroom to support individual pupils rather than making changes to curriculum delivery or materials they used (e.g. scribes for pupils were requested for any tests rather than any different forms of assessments being considered; difficult language or concepts contained in materials or classwork were expected to be ‘translated’ for individual pupils within the class by support for learning staff; all pupils were expected to do complete work within the same time-scale - targeted pupils to be helped to achieve this by any support for learning staff present)

- support provided to pupils was short-term only, intended to help them ‘cope’ with difficulties relating to specific pieces of classroom work as and when they arose and thus, reinforcing their perceptions that they could not achieve without help
- the in-class support provided, generally a teacher or classroom assistant being allocated to work alongside individual pupil(s), which made pupils identified as having difficulties very visible within the classroom context, was often resisted by the pupils being supported and this could lead to conflict between support staff and pupils
- some pupils became reliant on support and felt unable to cope with classroom work without adult help
- some pupils, despite support being available to them, became disengaged from, or disaffected with, school .

These observations were consistent with the research evidence available (Allan, Brown and Munn, 1991; Riddell, Brown and Duffield, 1994; Allan, 1999) and I concluded that, in order to have arrangements in place which better enabled the pupils to be motivated to engage with school learning and benefit from it, then it would be necessary to find out from them what they wanted. My belief that this was a productive and worthwhile area for research was informed by my acceptance of an approach to learning difficulties which adopts the viewpoint that

“difficulties in the path of inclusion(are) just obstacles to something that is naturally and unarguably good.”
(Clough and Nutbrown, 2002, p60).

Based on such reasoning, my observations while a teacher led me to develop the following assumptions

- that teachers do use practices which marginalise pupils with learning difficulties
- that pupils have an awareness of this
- that it is something which should be changed.

These assumptions, and a belief that pupils should have more of a voice in arrangements which are made for and about them, led me to make the choices I did about the focus of my research and the ways in which it would be organised and carried out.

3.3 Problematising power relations

In my time as a support for learning teacher I was involved in the practices which were in place to identify those pupils who, when transferring from primary school to secondary school, were thought to have difficulties with learning which would require in-class interventions and/or tuition support from support for learning staff. Such decisions were based largely on normative assessment data or opinions expressed by teachers of how well pupils were coping in their classes. The pupils were not routinely consulted about their perception of possible difficulties and their support needs at the time of transfer to secondary. The type of support to be provided to class teachers (e.g. support for learning staff in classes to target support to individuals or adaptation of curriculum materials to accommodate individual learning) was also a decision made mainly through a process involving discussion among teachers. While efforts were made to hear pupils' views, this tended to be about decisions already made rather than involving them fully in the decision making process.

Practices in respect of identifying and supporting pupils who have additional support needs are, largely, the same in the authority where this study was carried out as had been my experience when teaching in other authorities. Pupils, prior to their entry to secondary school, are assessed, either through normative data obtained through their school career (e.g. 5-14 test scores; diagnostic tests to identify literacy or numeracy weaknesses) or subjective evaluations by teachers. Thus, as identified by Clough and Barton (1995) the categorical thinking of the professions constructs definitions of them based on what they do not know. These identities are communicated to the secondary school which puts into action the systems it has available by planning to allocate support for learning resources and/or make timetable modifications for

individual pupils. I spoke to the Principal Teachers of Learning Support in both schools who confirmed that it is routine practice for information about the nature of individual pupils' learning difficulties to be circulated to all teaching staff and, although in both schools there is some negotiation with pupils about the support they will be given, it is within the parameters of decisions which have already been made about them, e.g. there may be some choice given to individuals as to which subject is to be missed to allow them to be timetabled to do literacy work in a support for learning classroom or a pupil may be asked whether or not they want to use a lap-top in class. Pupils' views about whether or not they think they have difficulties with learning and, if so, what would make these difficulties cease to exist, are not generally sought.

It is the intention of this study to problematise the taken-for-granted constructs. It needs to be acknowledged that the selection of pupils whose views will be sought for this study, identified as they were by the support for learning teachers, was, from the start, determined by the practices of exclusion and separation put in place by those who have 'power' over the pupils (Billington, 2000). Pupils are defined, by the professionals who work with them, in terms of their failures to achieve within a normative system, i.e. where learning difficulties are defined as "where the child or young person requires additional arrangements to be able to access the curriculum" (SOED Circular 4/96) or "*where a child or young person has greater difficulties learning than the majority at the same age*" (Education (Scotland) Act 1980), and now as defined by the Education (Additional Support For Learning) Act (2004), a pupil is considered to have an additional support need when an individual "*is, or is likely to be, unable without the provision of additional support, to benefit from the school education provided*". Pupils are identified and categorised, on the assumed basis that they may need some form of additional support with their learning other than is routinely provided to pupils and then targeted for support interventions. Pupils identified by the systems in place do not have, or have limited, agency in negotiating their own identity as it is framed for them within the existing structures and understandings which identify and categorise them by what they cannot do (Benjamin, 2002). Such pupils who are identified as different from their peers and

are targeted for learning support may already feel marginalised and perceive themselves as low status within the hierarchy of sub-cultures in the school; being targeted for questioning could reinforce their perception of their inferior position (Danaher, Schirato and Webb, 2000).

3.4 Previous research

In their literature review before undertaking an international study into the views of pupils with special educational needs about their educational experience, Wade and Moore (1993) acknowledge that research in the field of how students' views might be used to inform educational practice, although scant, indicated the value of consulting students and the validity of their contributions. I have also found that there were few data available about the desirability or efficacy of support interventions relating to those pupils such as were the target group of my research, which was, those pupils who did not have any identified physical or cognitive impairments which would affect their ability to learn but had been identified, by within-school processes, as having difficulties with learning.

In academic literature the broad general category of 'special needs' is used to refer to a wide range of pupils with very different needs in a wide range of different contexts. A search of the academic literature on the topic when beginning reading in preparation for this thesis revealed that the majority of research data available focused on those children and young people labelled within disability or medical models. A then recent issue of *Support for Learning* (Volume 19, No 4, 2004), the journal the National Association for Special Educational Needs, was devoted to gaining young people's perspectives. Exemplifying what seemed to be a gap in the research evidence available, none of the articles referred to the perceptions of those children and young people who are in the category which is the focus of this thesis, that is, those whose learning difficulties do not relate to any identified physical or cognitive impairment but whose difficulties are socially and culturally produced by the systems and structures of school education. Each article had a focus mainly on issues relevant to a particular group (e.g. physical disabilities, significant

communication problems) and the studies referred to are based on populations within either the English or Irish education systems and the relevant legislation within these countries. While the principles and goals, as described in the NASEN policy within the journal, are consistent with those in Scottish policy statements, the social, political and education contexts are different. I found there to be, generally, lack of analysis of the Scottish context or, the exclusion in studies of those pupils with either generalised or relatively slight learning problems which require them to be targeted for in-class support, in mainstream settings, from support staff or class teachers. However the journal contained an article by Rose and Shevlin (2004), which referred to a study based on a group of young people with a range of different personal circumstances labelled as disabilities and which had led to them being marginalised and treated differently from their peers. As the author expressed

“young people have been excluded... (from).. participation in everyday activities simply as a result of having a label” (p155).

He notes how the dominant power relationships, as argued by Tomlinson (1982), result in the dominance of one group (those who have the power to label and make decisions) over a less dominant group (the pupils, who have little or no say in how they are labelled or treated). In his study the pupils identified the following, which are of relevance to this thesis (and I am excluding here any to do with physical access to the built environment as my study is about pupils for whom this does not apply) as examples how their ‘labels’, in some way, excluded them from access to the full curriculum:

- pupils were expected to adapt to mainstream norms
- exclusionary practices they experienced emphasised ‘difference’
- teacher expectations of them were low.

The themes identified above seem to me to provide useful insights into what may be the experiences of the pupils who are the subject of my study but, to gain insights into the particular circumstances experienced by such pupils to inform future practice

in the particular area (of targeted support for learning in mainstream settings), the views of that specific group of pupils must be sought.

I believe it is worthwhile doing this as there is research which consistently recommends the worth of consulting with pupils to establish their perceptions as this helps improve their attainment (Duffield, Allan, Turner and Morris, 2000). Also I am encouraged by the views expressed by Noyes (2004) and that of Rose and Shevlin (2004) that, by listening to the views of pupils we can acquire insights will help us to challenge and change the discourse of inclusion to ensure it is socially just.

Improving social justice through enabling pupils to make as good educational attainments and them being fully included in school is an agenda I am interested in taking forward and it is my hope that my small scale qualitative research project can contribute by offering insights to the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of pupils identified as additional support needs about what their support needs are and how do they think they could best be met within classroom contexts?
2. What are teachers' perceptions of how pupils identified as having additional support needs can have their needs met in classroom contexts?
3. What implications are there for future practice produced by the contributions from pupils and their teachers in relation to the above?

3.5 Research design and data collection tools

I made the decision to use semi-structured group and individual interviews, aware that these instruments of data collection were from the traditional, masculine research paradigm and that the fact I was controlling the form and purpose of the data gathering were enactments of my social power. I was aware that these arrangements could be seen to be perpetuating the unequal power relations my research was seeking to examine and illuminate and that I would need to be sensitive to how this could influence the relationship between the interviewer (me) and the interviewees. It has already been noted that the pupils may, because of being

identified as a group having additional support needs, feel marginalised and low status (Danaher, Schirato and Webb, 2000) and I acknowledge that and so considered ways to try to ensure that the selection for interview and the interview process itself did not add to any further feelings of oppression or lack of agency.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) contend that power relationships in interviews should be acknowledged by attending to three important areas – informed consent, right to privacy, and freedom from harm. In the discussions with the pupils before they agreed to be interviewed I met them as a group to outline what I was asking them to do and, gave them assurance of anonymity and that nothing said would be passed to anyone in the school (other than if they told me something which suggested they were being harmed in some way, in which case, I would have to act on that). I made it as clear as I was able to that they could, if they wished, not take part. At the start of each interview I spent some time again assuring them of anonymity and asking if they were still happy to take part.

May (1993) suggests (referring to recommendations by Moser and Kalton (1983)) that there are three conditions for successful interviews which support conditions where the interviewees are enabled to feel comfortable and to answer in their own terms. In setting up and carrying out the interviews, I made efforts to ensure that these conditions were met:

1. accessibility: the interviewees have the information to be able to answer the questions
2. cognition: the interviewees understand what is expected of them
3. motivation: the interviewees feel their contribution is valued

By attending to these conditions I hoped to reduce the likelihood of involvement in the research being interpreted by the pupils in a way which contributed to any perceptions of them being of lesser status or importance than their peers.

It was my intention in my research to understand better the values, attitudes and beliefs of the interviewees, and therefore, it was important to allow them to answer in their own terms. What is known about interviewing school pupils in general was taken into account when considering the data collection method to be used. As the pupils in my research also had been identified as having learning difficulties it was important to ensure that any data collection method used did not, because of its dependence on forms of language (written or spoken) create difficulties for the pupils involved due to their level of expressive or receptive language skills. I was aware that any data collection instrument(s) or processes had to be constructed, in terms of the language used, the activities they involved and the circumstances under which they were used, to accommodate the abilities of the pupils who were participating and ensure that the condition of accessibility was met. Research evidence has suggested that school pupils can have well formulated opinions about their learning and the things teachers should do to help them to learn (Postlethwaite and Haggerty, 2001), but it is also acknowledged that there can be difficulties associated with obtaining authentic views from children with learning difficulties and that they respond best to open-ended questions (Lewis, 2002).

I considered that the semi-structured interview format would provide a structure where the questions could serve as prompts to encourage the pupils to provide me with information in the areas I had decided I would like to find out about, but would also allow for the pupils to develop their own line of thought (Bechhofer and Paterson, 2000) and lessen any possible effects of my questions leading only to a line of thinking concordant with my own (Silverman, 2000). The arrangements were intended to be supportive to them so that they could fully participate in the process and would allow the opportunity for consensus building between researcher and the researched, as is considered appropriate within an interpretivist paradigm. Further questioning of pupil responses on issues they raised which were not covered by the set questions would allow for exploration of situation specific interpretations of understandings (Mercer, 2002) which is what I was setting out to achieve.

I was aware also that the power relationships created by organisational structures can influence respondents' attitudes (Ball, 1994) and that any focus on pupils' needs enacts a disciplinary power to categorise and manage (Billington, 2000) and that my role, as an unknown adult visitor speaking only to those who were in the pre-described 'learning difficulties' category could be perceived by the pupils as another aspect of the system which judges and categorises them. That, because of the above, pupils' responses may tend to be guarded or that they would seek to present themselves as 'good' pupils within the set of norms they were accustomed to in school would need to be taken into account in my analysis of their responses. I knew that I would also need to take into account possible limitations in their responses in terms of the pupils being able to conceive any educational arrangements different from what they were familiar with.

For the pupil interviews, I also decided to follow up the initial individual interviews with group interviews. I did this to enhance the robustness of the data collected as it has been noted that group interviews, where the pupils know and relate to one another, can enable issues arising to be explored in some breadth and depth, are acknowledged as being good for producing statements which are in line with group norms (Lewis, 1992), and also they can provide circumstances where the pupils can provide support to each other (Lewis, 1992). I hoped that the group interviews would be an opportunity to explore further what had been identified by individuals, but there would be a need also to be attentive to another factor, that such group encounters can lead to problems for the participants to express criticism as they may be intimidated by their peers (Powney and Watts, 1987; Ruddock, Chaplain and Wallace, 1996).

I made the decision to tape all the interviews as I wanted to be part of them, not just to listen and scribe. By being part of the dialogue it would be possible not only to encourage interviewees to expand on what was said to explore it further, but I wanted to be part of a real conversation and to represent myself truly as someone with a genuine interest in what they were saying. Such involvement is consistent with feminist epistemology where research which is based on open and active exchange is

desirable. Being involved in the dialogue as it developed would, I hoped, also develop rapport and create a trusting relationship (Spradley, 1979) in May (1993, p98) which would, in turn, support the interviewees to feel relaxed and the conversation to flow freely. As the interviews would be my only opportunity to talk to the interviewees and it would not be possible to have them listen to recordings or look at transcripts, interacting with them about their responses, as part of a conversation, I thought would be my best chance to have as faithful an account as possible of what they were meaning by what they said while also providing some form of structure for comparability over each group in respect of the individual interviews.

I considered that a further benefit of taping the interviews would be that would give me the opportunity to spend time considering the pupil responses before developing a method to record the data so that it could be analysed. The categories I chose were shaped by the events or opinions that the pupil accounts had seemed to give emphasis to. The full transcripts made it possible to explore the pupils' descriptions in detail beyond the initial categorisations. Such an approach was consistent with the proposed goal of this part of the research, which was to report the perceptions of the pupils as authentically as possible although, "no single representation (*mine*) can capture all the relevant aspects of the phenomenon" (Coxon, 1984,) in Powney and Watts (1984, p162).

It is the intention of this research to hear the voices of the pupils and their teachers through methodology which takes into account, and attempts to move beyond, a view of the social world where there is the exclusion of the voices of certain groups and the suppression of difference. To be able to better understand voices of the groups generally excluded from decisions made about how additional support needs should be conceptualised, identified and addressed, that is, the pupils and their teachers,

I need to engage in what Clough and Nutbrown (1992) define as ‘radical listening’ that is, I must try to:

“ understand something of what lies behind what is said by research subjects(and try to).....understand what this means within their particular framework” (p24).

To do this I would need to be attentive to things which might not be expressed explicitly but have to be deduced/inferred/interpreted and apply the following principles of ‘radical listening’ to my analysis of the pupils’ responses,

- to listen because I wanted to understand the pupils’ and teachers’ understandings
- to hear what they think – not what they want me to think they think
- because I go into the interviews with my own perceptions and my own hopes about what they will say I have to be open to actually listening to what I hear (i.e. allow my own thinking and any presumptions be influenced by what the pupils and teachers say).

As a result of reading the academic literature relating to the impact of policy contexts and social circumstances on the working practices of teachers I was led to conclude that the prevalence of managerialist practices with their regimes of accountability tended to put pressure on teachers to conform to centralist prescription to achieve set targets (Paterson, 1995; Power, 1997; Ozga, 2000; Ranson, 2003). The evidence suggested that this has led to a narrowing of the work undertaken by teachers; less time being available to work with pupils with additional support needs and, increased stress and workload for teachers (Gewirtz, 2002). Within the Scottish context the *McCrone Inquiry* (2000) and *The Teachers Health and Well Being Study* (2004) also identified that the amount of paperwork, lack of time to work with pupils who have additional support needs and the need for more adults to be available to be present in classes to provide 1-1 support for pupils were concerns of teachers. All of the above, taken with acknowledged cultural and historical factors which have been identified

as having influenced the thinking of the teaching workforce to be conservative (with a small *c*), cautious, compliant (Smout 1986; Humes, 1986; MacDonald, 2004), and to prioritise the academic aspects of education (Paterson, 1983; Mcpherson, 1993) suggest that teachers may currently not be serving the needs of social justice by not recognising and responding to the rights of all pupils to have their educational needs fully provided for.

It is not possible to make assumptions about all teachers based on the broad generalisations referred to above. A purpose of my research was to allow all participants to have a voice: therefore, I was also interested to learn the views of the teachers of the pupils in my study. However, from my role within the local authority, I judged that this would not necessarily be easy to achieve.

I was aware that the power relationships created by organisational structures can influence respondents' attitudes (Ball, 1994) and that asking individuals to report their experience involves them in an act of exposure which requires a degree of courage on their part (Powney and Watts, 1987). As an education officer of the local authority where the research was carried out, I am involved in the administration of the systems of surveillance and resource allocation which it has been acknowledged teachers work under. I am required to contribute to data collected by HMIe when schools are inspected; I provide data for the authority to support the resource allocation process in respect of individual pupils, and I work closely with the Quality Improvement Officers who oversee the school self-evaluation programme. I am often asked by either local authority service managers or school staff (teachers or managers) to provide advice on matters of pedagogy or resource deployment and also, visit schools to discuss matters raised by parents in respect of problems relating to children's education. Therefore, I knew I would need to be sensitive, in my interviews with the teachers and the subsequent analysis of their responses, to the extent to which their existing perceptions about power relations or their vulnerabilities in relation to being interviewed by someone who may be associated with centralised systems of assessment and control.

I wanted the teachers to have space to express their own views, to feel comfortable to talk and to provide information for me so I opted for semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. This I hoped to provide structure to the interview to encourage the teachers to express their views in areas I was interested to find out about as it was a concern that they would restrict what they said to cover aspects of practice and /or resource provision which are the usual topics of our discussion. Also, the method would provide opportunity for further questions to explore issues raised by the teachers themselves, as with the pupil interviews, in a way which allows for exploration of situation specific interpretations of understandings

3.6 Selecting the participants for the study

The schools

The local authority schools draw pupils from a range of socio-economic communities in rural, coastal and small town settings across the authority. There are no separate special schools within the authority. As a consequence of there being no special schools in, or close to, the individual communities in the authority, some pupils who have what are regarded as moderate to severe learning difficulties (using the accepted descriptors in place prior to the enactment of the Additional Support For Learning Act, 2004) have been educated in specially resourced classes in mainstream schools where inclusion in mainstream activities/settings has been encouraged. The presumption of mainstream contained in the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act (2000) has built on this existing practice and only a very small percentage the school population (0.4 % - estimated from departmental figures, September 2009) are educated outwith the authority in special schools for pupils with learning difficulties.

At the time of the commencement of the data collection, all of the secondary schools in the authority were involved in a partial rebuild programme and financial and contractual circumstances had prolonged the length of time the schools had been part building site and subject to problems of exposure to the elements, noise, mess and restricted access to accommodation and facilities. In selecting schools to take part in this research, it was necessary to take into account the great amount of pressure staff

and pupils were already subjected to as a result of the conditions they were working in; the time available to staff or pupils to meet with me (for some were in stages of moving from one part of the school to another as building works were being finalised), and the availability of suitable space to meet.

The Pupils

After having obtained the permission from the headteacher of each school, I asked the principal teachers of support for learning departments to identify pupils for the project.

In the authority, for budgetary and resource allocation purposes, pupils with difficulties with learning are grouped into three categories:

1. those pupils with the most severe and/or complex needs (generally low-incidence) are allocated additional resource provision, for more specialised or intensive support than the school can provide from within its own staffing and resources, from a centrally administered system
2. resource provision for supporting other pupils with less severe, higher incidence learning difficulties, is provided from within the school's own staffing and resources (a portion of each school's total budget, based on a formula, is allocated annually to cover this)
3. other pupils who are identified as having learning difficulties but who are not prioritised for support in either of the categories above are but who are supported by any available support for learning time or by their subject teachers in their classes.

To help class teachers to be aware of the learning needs and to provide and support for those pupils who do not have any specific packages of support allocated to them (Categories 2 and 3 above), information about pupils' strengths and difficulties is circulated to all staff. In both schools, support for learning staff offer consultancy and advice to departments or individual teachers.

For this project, the support for learning teachers were asked to identify those first year pupils who had learning difficulties which led them to be placed in the third group. School 1 identified 12 pupils, School 2 identified 10. The choice of sample was thus influenced by the decisions made as a result of the collaborative process based on taken-for-granted constructs of exclusion and separation (Billington, 2000) between primary teachers, secondary teachers and other adults involved with individual pupils of identifying and evaluating the support needs of pupils at their time of transfer to secondary school, and the availability of resources which could then be targeted to individual pupils.

Pupil Consent

Acknowledging the ethical issues in respect of obtaining as genuine, informed consent as possible when working with children with learning difficulties (Lewis, 2002), I set out to give each pupil as much information and as much choice as possible. In each school I met with those pupils as a group and outlined the project, explaining that the intended outcome of the research was to find out what works best for helping pupils in classrooms and, while it was towards a course I was doing, any useful information would be fed back to the school and the education authority. We discussed what the words ‘confidentiality’ and ‘anonymity’ meant and that this was guaranteed to them, but I also explained to them that if anyone said anything which suggested they were being harmed in some way then I would have to pass that information on. They were told that they could opt out if they wished. I outlined with them how the interviews would be carried out – as individual taped sessions lasting around half an hour each – and that the likely follow-up would be group interviews to go over some of the ideas raised.

They were asked to either give or withhold consent by signing a form (Appendix A). Two pupils from School 1 indicated that they did not wish to take part (they had been identified by their teachers as having general problems and seemed disaffected with school so it would have been interesting to have their perspectives included). Letters were sent home to the parents of the pupils who had agreed to take part in the

project, outlining the project and asking whether or not they gave permission for their son/daughter to take part (Appendix B). Both schools were very helpful in following up the letters and 10 were returned from each school. Due to absence or timetabling problems on the days the interviews were organised, 9 pupils from School 1 and 8 from School 2 were interviewed. Only 4 of the pupils were female and all of the pupils from School 2 were male. The group comprised a range of different types of learning difficulties: some were identified as globally poor; some had acknowledged dyslexia or dyslexic tendencies; others had specific difficulties such as autistic spectrum type behaviours and one pupil had a visual impairment.

3.7 Data collection – the pupils (Part 1)

The initial data collection tool used was a semi-structured interview schedule (Appendix C). The first question was intended to help put the pupils at their ease, in an unfamiliar setting with an interviewer they did not know, by allowing them to talk about things they had liked since coming to secondary school. It also gave me the opportunity to identify if there were any pupils for who secondary was a negative experience as this would need to be taken into account in the analysis of the data. After the first question I played the tape back for the pupil to hear. This enabled both of us to know that the volume and voice quality of the tape was satisfactory and, hopefully, helped the pupils to become more familiar with, and relaxed about, the interview process.

Only one pupil identified problems associated with transferring to secondary school, saying that he had experienced bullying (he did also indicate that he had reported this to members of staff and the matter had been dealt with). Other than that, the pupils reported that the transition to secondary had gone well and meeting new friends, new teachers, getting used to new subjects and being in a building which was not only unfamiliar but, at that time, partially constructed, had been successfully mastered. Subsequent questions were intended to explore, in more detail, which subjects, policies, practices and support strategies they most liked or disliked, and also asked them to consider what would be required to make the experience of learning better for them.

Individual thirty minute interviews were taped and, in all but two of them, pupils seemed relaxed, communicative and spoke openly and at length, taking up all or almost all of the time allocated. The tapes were later transcribed for analysis. I took minimal notes during the interviews; this left me freer to maintain eye contact with the pupils and to be able to observe their body language. At the start of each interview I noted the subjects each individual pupil identified as liking or not liking so that I could refer to this throughout the interview and I made brief notes about any potential indicators of the pupil's mood or attitude (e.g. amount of eye contact, body language, tone of voice) which might have to be taken into account in the analysis of what was said.

Being the interviewer, transcriber and analyser raises issues about the possibility of my understandings and perceptions influencing the data I chose to select or the conclusions arrived at from the data. My own prior experience as a secondary school support for learning teacher and my knowledge of staff and systems in the two schools could lead me to arrive at understandings not made explicit by what was said in the interviews. To make it less likely that my own perceptions and assumptions would lead me to miss, or misrepresent, what was said, I transcribed the interviews as verbatim. I did this as far as possible, noting hesitations, pauses etc and re-listening to and reflecting on what I thought the para-linguistic features were conveying. I also added punctuation which seemed to reflect the speech of the interview. In this way for each interview a text was created, which was open and accessible to myself or others for subsequent, further analysis (Silverman, 2000). Two samples of transcripts of pupil interviews are included in Appendix G.

3.8 Data collection – the pupils (Part 2)

Initial Difficulties

At this stage in the project, so that any common themes or issues which were raised in the individual interviews could be explored in ways which would enhance reliability and the context could provide support to the pupils (Lewis 1992), I had intended to follow these interviews with group interviews at the start of the next school session. I recognised also that I should take into account that such group interviews also have the potential for individuals to be intimidated by their peers not to challenge any group norms (Powney and Watts 1987; Ruddock Chaplain and Wallace 1996) and would therefore needed to be mindful, when constructing the questions for these groups (based on data from the individual interviews) of which topics to include. I also recognised the need to be sensitive to any group dynamics which could contribute to inhibiting individuals to respond. I was aware of the research which had found that it can be more difficult to elicit responses about positive experiences than negative ones (Ruddock, Chaplain and Wallace, 1996) and as it was an intention of this research project to identify which aspects of current practice pupils find most effective as well as any they do not, I hoped to be able to use the format of the questionnaire and the circumstances of the interviews to encourage pupils to do just that.

The issues I had intended to explore further in the group interviews were:

- whether or not reading and writing were still problems for the pupils and what strategies had, or had not helped with this
- examples of subjects where such ‘successful’ strategies are used (What does the teacher do ?/ What do the pupils do?/How well do the pupils do ?)

However, because of health problems which resulted in a prolonged absence from work, I was unable to do this at the time I had intended. When I did return to work and was able to resume the research the pupils were in their fourth year. A goal of

the initial research design had been to identify which aspects of classroom practice pupils who had been identified as having learning difficulties found either ineffective or effective. The time which had passed since the original interviews meant that the pupils themselves were potentially a richer source of information. At the time of the original interviews they had been at secondary school for slightly less than a year. At the time I was able to interview them again, they had been in secondary education for just over three years and, therefore, had much more experience of different teachers and, possibly, a range of classroom practices.

Organising the Interviews

Taking into account that the pupils themselves had identified reading and writing as things which they found difficult and that pupils with learning difficulties have been found to respond best to open-ended questions (Lewis 2002) I prepared a series of questions for use in group, semi structured interviews which referred to the issues raised by the pupils in the original interviews but I kept the language straightforward (Appendix E). I had also to take into account that as the pupils were now on the verge of becoming young adults, I did not want to over-simplify it and make it seem not age-appropriate. The intention was to use the questions to prompt discussion of the issues of reading, writing and in-class support and, as a support to overcome any difficulties with reading, as well as giving them copies to read, I was going to read over the questions with them. I did not want the discussion only to be led by me and I also included a prompt sheet, with key words identifying a range of possible classroom activities, and a final simple questionnaire which covered working in groups, teacher explanations, the types of work they were given in classes and a general question about how satisfied they had been with their experience of learning in school so far.

The interview tasks were constructed with the intention of allowing the pupils to be involved in listening and talking and with limited reading and writing (and I would be on hand to provide any support required). My intention had been to provide opportunities for the pupils to engage with the interview process without any emphasis on any one language area. I had considered making more use of visual by

including pictures rather than word prompts for Question 3 but was unable to find visuals which did not compromise my intention to make the materials easy to understand and unambiguous. This was particularly difficult to achieve for activities involving interactions with others (e.g. support from other pupils/working with friends/listening to others). It was also difficult to find visuals which clearly illustrated such activities and were not too childish for the age of this target group of pupils.

There were issues of obtaining access to the pupils: timetabling (identifying a time when subject staff would agree to release the pupils); examinations (both schools had different calendars for Standard Grade Preliminary examinations which, when taken together covered a period from November to January; availability of pupils (various out-of school trips, work experience and pupil absence). Access to the pupils was organised through the Support for Learning departments. On the day of the first group interview at one of the schools a trip out of school had been organised by the subject teacher and the information was not passed on to the SFL teacher. Only one pupil from the identified group was in school. The pupil was willing to be interviewed on his own so we decided to proceed with that. We used the prepared interview schedule and it became apparent that there was no question to prompt mention of any instances where the pupil(s) had not been happy with the way they had been taught. I added in Question 5 to cover this and included it in the subsequent group interviews.

Of the pupils who I had originally interviewed I was able to re-interview, in groups, 14 of them: one group of 5 and another of 3 in school 1, and a group of 5, plus one pupil on their (for reasons described above) in school 2.

I explained to each group the reasons behind the time gap since I had last spoken to them and had told them that I would return within a few months. I also reminded them that the same guarantee of confidentiality I had given them previously still applied and also that they were free not to take part in the group interview if they did not want to. I had discussed this with the SFL teachers when arranging the interview

times and they had reported to me that all of the pupils, who would be available for interview, were happy to take part. While I cannot be certain that the pupils were not conforming to what was expected of them, there was no obvious apparent reluctance to take part. This was reinforced by the relaxed atmosphere which seemed to prevail in the group interviews and the full answers the pupils gave.

Advantages and disadvantages of the methods used

The format of the sessions, using a semi structured questionnaire, and with prompt sheets which I had hoped were age appropriate and helpful, combined with the pupils' willingness to be communicative and speak to me, made it possible for the sessions to be quite informal and relaxed. We were also able to adopt a conversational style as we went through the questions. This made it easy, and very natural, for me to ask for clarification and elaboration where necessary as they spoke, and also, for the pupils to interject while I spoke if I said something which did not accurately reflect their meanings.

This was particularly helpful in teasing out some of the details and achieving greater clarity when they made summative statements. An example of this is when in Group B's first response to Question 5 (giving examples of lessons which they enjoyed and thought effective and/or those they did not enjoy or considered not to be effective) they said that there were some really good teachers and some really bad teachers. I asked them if they could explain what they meant, or give an example of what a really good teacher does

“they make subjects more interesting”

I then asked if they could give me more details of how a teacher would do that

“they give you an easier way to remember something you need to know.....make you laugh”

When I explored this with them and put it to them that what they were referring to was teachers whose presentation style was such that, despite difficulties with the

lesson content they could make what was difficult seem interesting while at the same time making them feel relaxed and able to laugh – that learning was made easier when something seemed interesting and/or when it involved ‘fun’, they agreed.

Another example of how the informal style and ‘space’ to ask for further details as required was that I asked for an example of what they meant when they said that some lessons were ‘boring’. What came out of that was what seemed to be a very heart-felt description by one of the group

“when they spend a whole lesson not talking to you, just talking at you”

The others in the group agreed with this and elaborated

“they don’t let you ask questions when they are talking. leave it until the end”

“you can forget your question”

Despite reservations I had, based on the findings of previous research, that the group interview arrangement would inhibit the pupils from speaking about positive experiences, all groups were able to do so. However there is a dimension of the methods used which also needs to be acknowledged, that is, the extent to which the research process reproduced the power relations it was the intention to problematise and examine.

Clough and Barton (1995) argue that, the framing, carrying out and reporting of research is an especially charged political act and one where there is a value laden relationship between the researcher and the researched. Referring to research with people with disabilities (but there are parallels with pupils who have been labelled and segregated for different treatment on the basis of assessments which conclude that they have additional support needs), they maintain that there should be a commitment to examine the relationship between the researcher and the researched. Questions should be asked about the purpose of the research, and whose needs does it serve; whether or not it reproduces or challenges any existing power relations which are oppressive; whether the researched have been treated with respect and that

the process of the research should involve changes in the researchers' ideas and intentions.

I have become aware of the limitations I imposed on the process because of my assumptions. Based on my experience, which was affirmed by the labelling process of the pupils by the schools and which I did not question although I was aware of the power relations which had produced the labels, I thought that, because of the ability levels of the pupils, I needed to control the research process by providing parameters for discussion. This was why I chose a semi-structured interview, the questions I set and the role I assigned to myself in the discussions which took place. In doing so, despite my intentions otherwise, my research can be regarded as being oppressive. Answering the other questions: the work was for me in that it was part of my academic work although I hoped it was also for the pupils in that it would improve my understanding of their understandings and that I would use this to inform or influence future work to make classroom practices of more use and benefit to them; my role as an education officer and a researcher accorded me privilege where I was able to observe, record and make judgements about others and my voice was more powerful than that of the pupils. I acknowledge that the methods I used do reproduce aspects of existing power relations and oppression but I believe I showed respect to those being researched. I was honest with them at all times about the purpose and status of the research. I listened (and attempted to hear) what they said and I have tried to represent it as fairly and accurately as my notes, tapes and recollections make possible. Do I think this research can be used to challenge oppression? As a result of the work I have done in this small scale study, although it cannot be generalised, it has heightened my awareness of my need to more closely examine and challenge the assumptions and processes, not only where pupils are labelled and targeted for additional support (which was the original intention of the research) but also the assumptions and processes which can lead to research which attempts to be emancipatory still not allowing for equal participation of those being researched. This will inform my future thinking and practice in the work that I do with and about pupils to make it more emancipatory, and I hope that I may be able to influence others to do the same.

3.9 Data collection –the teachers

After they had been asked to take part in my project, some teachers, perhaps influenced by their possible perceptions of unequal power relations or feelings of vulnerability, asked if they could have an indication of what the questions would be about. I did not want to provide them with the full interview schedule too far in advance as I did not want them to give me prepared answers to the questions I had set and thus, obtain information which was totally dictated by my categories of thinking. Taking into account what Moser and Kalton (1983) recommend about the importance of accessibility (that the interviewees have the information to be able to answer the questions) and cognition (that the interviewees understand what is expected of them), to create conditions where the interviewees feel comfortable and able to speak in their own terms, I gave them a note of the general areas either by phone or by email, of what I wanted to talk to them about and they seemed satisfied with that.

I was also aware of potential difficulties associated with interviewing teachers about their practice that when their beliefs or practices were questioned teachers experienced negative emotions and feeling of vulnerability (Day, Kington, Stobart and Sammons, 2006). I did not want to make teachers feel I was attacking their views or their practice and cause them to feel vulnerable.

The interview schedule

Informed by what the pupils had said, my intention was that the interviews would find out from teachers, why they taught in the way that they did when teaching pupils who had been identified as having additional support needs, but I did not want to make them feel I was being critical or challenging. I wanted them to be comfortable to reflect on and talk about what sort of teaching style or strategies they used.

I decided it would likely be helpful to provide some pre-defined categories as a prompts for discussion about the teaching styles they use. Bennett's (1976) authoritative work created a typography for categorising teaching styles. Its focus,

based on issues arising from the Plowden Report, was on the distinction between what it defined as formal or informal teaching. I decided against using Bennett's descriptors as to use only division of formal/informal does not fully capture the range of activities covered by secondary teachers currently as classroom practice has changed a great deal over the last thirty years and the curriculum now includes activities involving talking, practical tasks, folio work and active learning.

Work by Grasha (1996) expands on the distinction between formal/informal to create a wider range of descriptors of the features of the instructional process as employed by teachers divided into four main groups as shown below:

- Formal authority (*whole class lessons/lectures/pupils do well in assessment*)
- Demonstrator or personal model (*role player/demos/pupils follow teacher example to master skills*)
- Facilitator (*pupil teacher interaction/pupils work independently/agreed content/reflect on learning together*)
- Delegator (*teacher as a resource to be called upon as needed/pupils supported to become independent learners/state problems – allow pupils to devise solution/review different outcomes*)

These descriptors seemed to fit in better with the range of tasks and expectations current within the secondary curriculum and I included them in the interview schedule.

The pupils had identified that they found the following features of teaching as being supportive to their learning

- collaborative working with others
- teachers mediating the learning process/engaging with pupils
- the use of visuals or computers
- learning transferable skills which enabled them to learn/work independently (in and out of school).

The body of academic work I had consulted had identified the following as being current features of practice within the performativity culture teachers work in

- a focus on academic attainment which narrows teachers work
- time spent on administrative tasks at the expense of teaching time
- in Scotland specifically, a tendency to be compliant and not challenge, even where it mitigated against social justice.

The *McCrone Report* (Scottish Executive, 2000), informed by what teachers themselves had said, identified the following concerns:

- lack of time/skills to be able to support pupils with additional support needs
- reliance on other staff/agencies to take responsibility for pupils with additional support needs
- the majority of teachers currently employed are in the 40-53 age range and may be experiencing “burn-out”.

It was my intention to identify what strategies/approaches the teachers did use when teaching pupils with additional support needs, and what influenced them to make these choices so the questions in the semi-structured interview schedule, and the discussion I had with them arising out of their responses to that, were shaped by all of the above. The questions I decided on (excluding the opening questions about length of service etc) focused on the following areas (Appendix F):

1. the type of learning activities which best enable pupils to learn
2. the strategy/approach they most used in their teaching
3. the type of learning activities that work best for pupils who have additional support needs
4. what they thought were the key goals of teaching

Selecting the teachers

Selecting teachers to be interviewed was also potentially problematic. As I knew some teachers in both schools more than others – some I have worked with to support/promote developing and sharing what is considered to be good practice, others I have worked with where some form of problem has been identified, and others again I have had no contact with at all, I did not want to be seen to be favouring or focusing on specific individuals. I also knew that access to teachers can be a problem, for reasons of their timetabling commitments and that there was no guarantee that they would be willing to give up their own time to meet with an education officer on a matter not directly work-related for, as previously referred to, lack of available time is a recurring concern for teachers. As a basis for deciding from which subject departments to interview teachers, I used the data from the pupil interviews where they had identified a preference for practical subjects and had generally found activities involving reading or writing difficult. I thought it would be useful to have a range of views from teachers both in subject areas which pupils had identified as presenting difficulties for them and ones they had said they found learning easier. To get around the problems of organising access in busy secondary schools and selecting teachers (given what I have already stated about my role in the authority and the relationship between that and some teachers) I negotiated with the head teachers that a deputy head teacher in each school would approach staff from their English, Modern Languages, Science and Home Economics departments to identify those who would be willing to be interviewed. They were also very helpful to provide support by identifying suitable times for the interviews and making arrangements for staff to be released from class if required. I made it clear that I was hoping for a range of views to be represented and, while I suggested some names, I left it to the judgment of the deputy heads and, therefore, I had no control over the range of age or experience of the teachers in my sample. Each school provided 4 teachers, one teacher from each of the named departments.

There was spread of ages and experience from 6 years teaching to 30 years. Only two of the teachers were male. Two teachers had experience of working in industry

before becoming teachers. One teacher had previously taught in England and another had taught aboard. However, for most of the teachers, teaching in Scotland was their main experience of working.

The Interviews

I wanted the teachers to have space to express their own views, to feel comfortable to talk. I began the interviews by asking them for some background information about their length of service, any other jobs they had before teaching and what had brought them into teaching. After that I provided them with a single A4 sheet with my questions on them. In this way I hoped their thinking would be supported by knowing what was coming next and, they would be reassured to know exactly what I was going to ask but there was not so much for them to read that it detracted from any conversation developing during the interview.

I wanted, as much as was possible, for the teachers to feel able to speak their views as freely as possible – without them considering my involvement as part of any data collection process on behalf of the local authority. I hoped that what they said would not be skewed by the fact that they saw my questioning as an opportunity for them to make a case for additional resources. While relationships are generally good with individual teachers, there is often an expectation that individuals in posts such as mine have the power to effect changes to staffing and budget allocations and this is often the main thrust of discussions with teachers. As I wanted to make it clear to the teachers that I was not there in my usual role and, at the start of the interview I gave an assurance that nothing said in the course of the interview would be communicated to anyone in either the school or the local authority but, if there were any issues raised that they wanted to me to explore on their behalf, then I would. I felt I had to offer them that as, while I was operating in a personal and not an official capacity, it was to be on matters relating to job and it seemed unhelpful that they might raise an issue which they wanted to take forward but I would have to act as if I knew nothing about it but they would have to raise it again. Given what is already known about how teachers feel about lack of time this did not seem a sensible course of action. As

it happened, the situation did not arise. All of the teachers interviewed were willing to discuss issues raised in a generalised way, and no-one used the time slot, as I had been apprehensive they might, to discuss specific individual resource concerns.

I was allocated around 30 minutes for each interview. Some of the teachers were constrained by timetable commitments (one had only 20 minutes available because of something which had arisen in the course of the day) but some continued to talk a bit beyond the time limit. All of the teachers were agreeable to me taping the interviews which I transcribed, as near to verbatim as possible, and as soon as possible afterwards. In this way I had as clear a recollection of the non-verbal aspects of the conversation and which enabled me to make sense of anything which was not clear from the words on the tape alone. As had been the case with the pupil interview transcripts I was aware that my being the interviewer, transcriber and analyser raised issues about my perceptions and understandings influencing the data I chose to select or the conclusions I arrived at from the data so, I made the transcripts as full as possible and available as text accessible to myself and others for subsequent, future analysis (Silverman, 2000). This was consistent with the purpose of this research which is to give space to those individuals whose voices are not generally represented and to do so in such a way which allows them to be as authentically represented as possible. Two samples of transcripts of teacher interviews are included in Appendix G.

Chapter 4 Data analysis

4.1 Analysing the data (pupils)

In this chapter I consider the data in the tapes and transcripts from the pupil and teacher interviews to find out what information they can provide in relation to my original research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of pupils identified as having additional support needs about what their support needs are and how do they think they could best be met within classroom contexts?
2. What are teachers' perceptions of how pupils identified as having additional support needs can have their needs met in classroom contexts?
3. What implications are there for future practice produced by the contributions from pupils and their teachers in relation to the above?

In the discussions below and using extracts from the transcripts I show that the pupils had clear views about the types of practice arrangements they thought would best help their learning to become independent, successful learners equipped with the necessary skills relevant to their lives beyond school. As social justice is also a concern that I have I show that the systems in place which identified pupils as having additional support needs are not socially just.

I show evidence that the teachers adopted a range of pedagogical approaches to support the learning of pupils with additional support needs where circumstances made this possible; that they believed that education should have a broader focus than only working towards exams and that having to do that created tensions for them.

In Chapter 5, I will discuss the implications of these findings for future practice.

4.2 Individual interview data

As noted in Chapter 3, the perceptions of pupils who are labelled as having difficulties with learning which are socially and culturally produced by systems and structures of school education rather than being attributable to any identified physical or cognitive problems, are not well represented in research data. However, research (Rose and Shevlin, 2004) has found that those pupils who are labelled as “different” from their peers, are excluded from access to the full curriculum, are expected to adapt to mainstream norms, and teacher expectations of them are low. An intention of this study, to listen to the views of pupils about their perceptions of what their learning needs are and how they could be met in classroom contexts, is also informed by the views expressed by Duffield et al (2000), Noyes (2004) and Rose and Shevlin (ibid) of the benefits to be gained from taking into account the views of pupils to help improve their attainment and provide insights how to change existing systems to make them socially just.

In order to explore what the pupils said, with reference to the above and to provide information from the initial interview data, I wanted to find out what the pupils’ views were about their educational arrangements at secondary school; what sort of arrangements they felt would best support them, and the extent to which they were involved in decisions about their learning. Having full transcripts of the individual pupil interviews made it possible to spend some time looking at the details of what the pupils had said. I initially read each transcript and noted what each pupil said about what they liked/disliked in terms of subjects they were taught and the support they had received; what they identified as being helpful, unhelpful or difficult, and any suggestions they had about what would make learning better for them.

During the interviews it had been apparent from the responses to questions 2 and 3 that certain subjects were preferred by a majority and that writing was identified as an activity experienced as difficult in some way by most of the pupils. However there was no apparent consensus apparent about subjects not liked. I noted the data in terms of subjects liked/disliked in tabular form (Appendix D) and it showed that 11

pupils liked Art, 9 liked Physical Education, 9 liked Home Economics, and 7 liked Craft and Design Technology: all of these subjects have an emphasis on practical activities. As a number of pupils had said that they found writing difficult this seemed significant and, referring to my notes for each transcript, I identified that 15 of the 17 pupils had identified writing as a difficulty for them. However, it can also be seen from the table that there was no consensus that all subjects which I assumed involved a substantial amount of writing were disliked by all pupils (e.g. English and history were liked by 4 pupils and only disliked by 3 and 4 pupils respectively) and science, a subject which also tends to contain a lot of practical work, was only liked by 5 pupils and disliked by 5).

To identify what it was which made subjects I assumed likely to involve a lot of writing acceptable to most pupils and liked by some, to also to identify which elements of classroom activities were most or least helpful to the pupils, and to see if there was any evidence of exclusion from a full curriculum, low teacher expectation or pupils having to adapt to fit in with mainstream practices, I re-read each transcript and this time I noted responses from each pupil in relation to the following:

- subjects liked/disliked
- activities identified as difficult
- type(s) of support available
- type(s) of support found helpful/unhelpful
- amount of support available
- pupil involvement in decisions about their support
- suggestions for future practice.

I examined the notes I had taken, looking for any reference to each of the above, noting any common themes across their responses and referring to the full transcripts for fuller details to illustrate these themes I explored what the areas identified above. Details of this, with illustrative quotes from the pupil transcripts are set out below.

Subjects the pupils liked/disliked

There was consensus that the subjects preferred were the ones where there was little or no written work and, given the numbers who expressed either dislike or difficulty associated with writing this would seem likely. However, it is interesting to note at this point that there was no consensus about the subjects the pupils did not like so it cannot be assumed that because some pupils find writing difficult and prefer the work tasks and learning arrangements in practical subjects, that they will all dislike all subjects where some of writing is required.

English, History, French, Maths and RME had all been identified by some pupils (see Appendix D) as being not liked. From my own experience and knowledge of the curricular content and assessment requirements of these subjects it seemed reasonable to assume that these subjects may place demands on pupils who had said they found reading and/or writing difficult. This led me to want to find out what it was made these subjects likable to some of them. The following information was extracted from the transcripts:

English

Sarah *“you have to draw quite a lot....you have to find out information yourself... I just find it quite fun”* (doing projects)

John *“some of the work we do is quite easy....drawing pictures”*

Geoff watched video of class novel

Liam /Daniel work set in an ability group

History

Katy opportunity to *“find out about stuff”*

Jane *“teachers are good ...someone who can control the class...and put fun into it at the same time”*

Geoff *“well, I really liked William Wallace”*

French

Anna *“interesting to learn different words...I like other cultures”*

Maths

Martin *“we get to go on computers”*

Geoff/Liam liked that the work set for the class (ability set) was at a level they
Daniel could work at

RME

Martin *“do plays and watch videos”*

Geography and German are subjects I was surprised to find that no-one had identified as not liked. In my experience as a secondary teacher I had observed that Geography could be difficult in that it can often involve pupils in learning a new and specialised vocabulary and often requires that knowledge is demonstrated through written assignments. Pupils with difficulties in reading and writing in their own language sometimes find learning a second language difficult. The interview transcripts revealed the following points about pupils’ opinions about these subjects.

Geography

Katy *“teachers are good at it”* and there was the opportunity to *“read maps”*

Kevin it was made easy by being allowed to get help from *“friends were next to me so I just asked them the questions”*.

German

James *“getting to draw.....getting to know another language”*

From further examination of the transcripts it was possible to see that, for some pupils, the arrangements for curriculum delivery were such that any difficulties associated with reading and/or writing were overcome. These arrangements can be grouped under the following headings

- varied forms of work (other than reading or writing)
- things pupils found interesting
- working with others
- good relationships with/confidence in their teachers
- level of work appropriate to pupils’ skill level

What the pupils said about writing

Given that writing was something that the majority of pupils identified as difficult for them, I noted the comments made about writing – what aspects of it created problems and how successfully was this supported for them:

The actual amount of writing was something which was identified as causing problems, for a variety of reasons:

That it can lead to fatigue

John *“writing for a long time can be tiring”*

Speed of writing required to keep up with the pace of classwork

Anna *“I can’t write fast enough”*

Colin *“I’m quite slow at writing”*

Perceived difficulties with handwriting

Anne *"I just haven't got very good handwriting"*

Geoff *"I find it hard to keep things neat"*

For one pupil the seeming mismatch between his thinking and his writing skills created frustration:

"Sometimes when I am writing I miss one or two words... if I try to speed up my writing no one can read it...if I try to slow down my thinking"(Shrugs and gesticulates, seems lost for words to express frustration).

Another pupil expressed very clearly the link between the lack of written work and his liking for practical subjects, CDT, PE and H Economics:

Daniel *"Because you don't have to sit down and write stuff"*

Another pupil was quite clear that his reasons for disliking Maths and English was:

Liam *"They're boring...you have to sit and do written work."*

Support provided for writing tasks

Spelling was specifically identified by 9 of the pupils as something they found difficult. From answers they gave about the ways in which their difficulties with spelling were supported, I identified strategies which I grouped into the following three categories

1. Support given as and when difficulty arises for the pupil in the classroom

Sarah (who had identified science as being something he liked, apart from the writing) *"they (science teachers) just give me spellings and tell me what to do"*

Jane *“when they mark it (written work) they will write down the words I get wrong most of the time and I go home and read it”*

Andrew *“I just put up my hand and they come to me and I ask how to spell”*

2. In-class supporter taking over a task if the pupil finds it too difficult

John *“If I tell her what to write she writes it down for me”*

(Such a response typical of the way in which pupils perceived and seemed to use a adult supporter as a scribe.)

3. Strategies which seem to be based on a premise that the pupil is not able to do the work set for the rest of the class

Martin This pupil was timetabled not to attend two subjects to follow a simplified programme of work in the Learning Support Base where
“they just give you a bit more help”

Andrew *“I’m dyslexic and stuff. Teachers say, “you can write wrong and that”.*

The examples of support referred to were instances when failure to be able to do the set classwork was identified either by the pupil, class teacher or support staff. The support seemed also to be provided in an ad-hoc way with only two of the pupils speaking about strategies they themselves could use, in a generalised way, to support their identified difficulties across curriculum areas. One pupil (Colin) had access to an Alphasmart laptop for most subject areas when he required it and he found this helpful to support his writing and give him easy access to correct spelling. Another pupil (Jane) made use of over-learning strategies for difficult vocabulary. However it is interesting to note that strategy was taught at primary school and no further advice had been given since transferring to secondary.

Although adapted work was available in some instances (by 2 pupils in 3 subjects in School, 5 pupils in 4 subjects in School 2) the most usual form of support pupils identified as being provided was in response to an emerging difficulty in the classroom. At this stage there is little evidence that the pupils known support needs were taken into account to influence the teachers' approaches to curriculum delivery. Different teaching approaches could perhaps have made the tasks set accessible to these pupils, who had been identified as likely have problems with extended written work their having to 'fail' to be able to receive support.

Type(s) of support pupils found acceptable/helpful or unacceptable/unhelpful

Of the 11 pupils who specified a particular form of support they either liked or found to be effective, 9 identified some form of support from a member of staff. No other form of support was identified by as many pupils: 5 cited groups or peer support; 2 made reference to being provided with appropriate materials and 1 mentioned that an individualised computer-based teaching package (Successmaker) was helping to bring about an improvement in literacy skills.

One pupil did not find any kind of support helpful and another found any kind of intervention unhelpful as it diverted him from his own way of doing things and made him "different" from the rest of the class.

Amount of support available

Only 5 pupils felt that enough support was available, 4 thought there was not, and 2 thought that there sometimes was.

Pupil involvement in decisions about their support

Only 5 pupils said that they had been involved in decisions about their support, 6 said that they had not been and 2 that they sometimes were.

Implications for future practice

From the comments pupils made in accounting for the subjects they either liked or disliked, and from their responses to Q7:

If you could make decisions about changes to be made in school to make learning better for pupils, what sort of changes would you want to make?"

There are clear indications that this group of pupils would prefer practices with less emphasis on reading and writing than there are at present.

When interviewed, the pupils had not completed a full year at secondary. I thought that to ask them to identify practices which would be different from those they were experiencing was perhaps a difficult exercise for them as they could not be expected to identify any practice which they had not encountered. Most of them made responses which reflected on practices they had some experience of and those which they would have liked more of. Only 2 made no response at all; 3 suggested strategies which would involve less time at school, and 2 were unable to answer the question because, as they had given such detailed responses to other questions, we ran out of time.

The practices the pupils suggested were

- more time to complete work (2 pupils)
- more use of computers (3 pupils)
- opportunities for discussions/to ask questions of the teacher (3 pupils)
- more emphasis on practical subjects in the curriculum (3 pupils)
- diagrams or pictures instead of text (4 pupils)
- group work (5 pupils)
- better explanations from teachers of concepts to be learned (5 pupils).

The majority of the responses related to the opportunity being available for mediated learning where there were opportunities to discuss and ask questions, either with

teachers or other pupils. In my experience as an SFL teacher and since then as an education officer, in-class support from a support teacher or classroom assistant is an extremely common form of support (and one cited by 9 pupils as a form of support they either liked or found to be effective). It is interesting to note here that although discussions with or explanations from teachers are cited as being preferred means of learning, only 2 pupils thought that the prevalent model of in-class support (1-1, as required, from a support teacher or assistant in the class) should be used more. Another 4 pupils expressed a dislike of any in-class support which they thought identified them as being in any way different from others.

Taken as whole, the responses of the pupils in the study suggest that they tend to prefer working in learning environments where

- they can work collaboratively with others
- teachers mediate and support the learning process
- classroom practices do not rely solely on text
- classroom practices enable them to be included in the work being done by the rest of the class.

4.3 Interpreting the data

One of the main purposes of this study is to gain insights into what aspects of classroom practice the pupils think best supports their learning. This I was able to do by attending to the transcripts. However my other concern is whether arrangements in place for pupils are socially just. The questions I asked did not address this directly so I attempted an analysis of this issue on the basis of the data by close analysis of what the pupils said and how they said it (Silverman, 2000). I realise that doing this was giving me privilege in relation to the pupils by making judgements about what they said relating to issues I had not discussed with them and I was conscious of excluding them from this part of the research process. (Clough and Barton, 1998).

Further analysis of the transcripts and the tapes suggested that the issues highlighted by pupils and the feelings they indicated either by speaking of them openly or sometimes in the way they spoke about them, focused on being identified as different. They were concerned, as in Rose's (2004) study, by practices which identified their difference, the need to have help with reading and writing, be targeted for learning support, to have to ask for help when text or tasks are too difficult for them, or be timetabled to spend some time out of subject classes and in learning support are practices which set them apart from their peers and are clearly visible to everyone. Some of the pupils expressed feeling uncomfortable about this

Katy *"sometimes you don't really want help if nobody else gets it"*

Clive when asked about who helped him in class, his response seemed defensive *"there are others in the class as well"* (needing help)

Michael *"it makes me feel stupid"*

Kevin was not keen to ask for help in class *"so people don't see"* (that he needed help).

The persistence of classroom practices which rely so heavily on reading and writing and required pupils to be in some way 'helped' so they could do better with the type of work routinely done in class exemplifies the prevalence of practices which make differences visible also that these require pupils to adapt to mainstream norms.

Although the pupils had been identified as having difficulties with reading and writing and this had been made known to the teachers, there was an expectation that the pupils should upgrade their skills so that they could 'cope' with classwork. A particularly telling example of a practice which emphasises difference but which is considered to be acceptable is illustrated by Anna. Anna seemed to be a confident, articulate, charming and witty young woman who had a visual impairment which meant that she could not read text at the size it is usually used for print materials or classroom boards:

"what they used to do in primary was that they had a little book and they wrote what was on the board"

and that was quite handy.”

Now however she has to frequently ask for written versions:

“I hate it when I have to ask.....I wish teachers would just tell them (new or supply staff)”

From this it seems that a small, organisational issue (for the school) of individual support needs is allowed to become public, emphasising her difference and it becomes also an issue which creates emotional difficulties for the pupil.

Pupils spoke about decisions being made about them in which they had no say.

Kevin *“I don’t do Geography because I go to Learning Support. Me and Andrew were good at it, we got full marks for the test but just got pulled out.”*

This pupil seemed to accept he had been as he put it “pulled out”. This form of words suggests powerlessness on his part, as if an act of force had taken place. This seems connected to what Billington, (2000) argues constitutes an attack on individual pupils who have additional support needs, such as labelling them, making decisions about them, making assumptions about their expected performance.

The instance of how James was ‘involved’ in the decision making about his altered timetable

James *“It was just decided by the teachers... we were to agree if we wanted to do it to get better at writing”*

provides an example of what Benjamin (2000, p107) refers to as “*enforced compliance freely given*”. This is also evidence elsewhere in the pupils’ responses where they are given what seems to be choice but it is actually limited to complying with arrangements which require them to be identified as not being included, and as requiring to be taught differently from their peers.

There is evidence of social injustice in that pupils are powerless in decisions about themselves and in being allocated to a group labelled as needing support which is provided for them in a way different from their peers, they are marginalised. Allan (1999) maintains that the marketisation of education has led to practices where pupils and resources are ‘managed’ effectively and in the examples given here pupils are ‘managed’ into timetable arrangements which do not necessarily meet their needs or reflect their wishes. From my own experience and from recent conversations with teachers responsible for organising learning support for pupils, teacher availability is a major factor in determining how arrangements are organised. So cultural imperialism, in the sense that the views of one particular group dominate others, is evident where the practices in place seem to serve the interests of the school rather than the pupils.

There are further examples of social injustice, defined as powerlessness created by lack of respect, care or mutuality (Gewirtz, 1998), in the responses given by Anna. She expressed understanding that the school could not be expected to meet her needs:

“You can’t expect them to go, ‘Oh by the way, there is this girl, she needs this that and the next thing, when they are teaching for one hour.”

Her words, *“this that and the next thing”* refer to her entitlements to be provided with whatever support she requires. She seemed to accept the cultural imperialism of the school and not feel she had any right to challenge this. Despite her apparent acceptance that she could not expect the school to meet her individual needs she told me of one incident where I think she found the lack of respect shown to her as upsetting.

A teacher was quizzing her about whether she should visit an optician because she seemed to be peering:

“she obviously didn’t know (about Anna’s sight problem) and it’s terribly embarrassing. She said it extremely loud so everybody heard. It didn’t really matter but it is extremely annoying.....But the thing is she knew me, I’m sure she knew me.”

I was moved by her story but was glad that the interview approach I had used had provided enough 'space' for her to give such an account which added more detail and provided insights into her experience.

Thus in what the pupils said it was possible sometimes to detect that they were aware of the effect on them of socially unjust practices which denied them choice, set them apart from their peers or did not treat them with care and respect. I was surprised that they did not express this either more often or more strongly. I acknowledge that it is necessary to take into account the limitations placed on their responses by unequal power relations created by my role as visitor/researcher which could influence what they said (Oakley, 1990 in May, (1993, p103) and also that individuals 'manage' the impression that they give to others by making what they say appropriate to their understanding of the situation they are in (Goffman, 1959) and so the pupils may have been trying to make sure they were behaving as 'good' research participants and 'good' pupils. So again I had a puzzle how to find this information from the data I had and again this involved careful re-reading of the transcripts.

In the main it seemed that 'biopower' was working successfully in that the pupils accepted the arrangements in place and the identities the in-school processes had ascribed to them, but there was also some evidence of their not being always passive and accepting but exercising their agency by challenging the limits of these identities (Allan, 1999) or, as one pupil expressed it, at least having the idea that challenge was possible.

John (who did not go to Geography) *"Not any more. One day I did a test and I got a certificate and I was really happy that I got full marks...I quite liked Geography...I get tempted to go up to Geography sometimes. I was going to go yesterday."*

I regret this pupil did not have the opportunity to further explain the story behind why he resisted the temptation.

There were other examples of pupils taking control of their own identities where, as suggested by Butler (1990) in Allan (1999, p49) what they did subverted their identities as failures. These she called transgressions and suggested that teachers could regard them as denial or non-co-operation by the pupils. In the pupil transcripts from my study, these instances were small and infrequent, but they were there. Butler's examples of such behaviour included pupils claiming to be coping, saying they were comfortable with the levels of difficulty of their work and there was some evidence of that in the transcripts. A number of pupils claimed that they found aspects of lessons 'fun' where it involved things they felt they were good at, such as map reading or drawing. There were also a number of instances where pupils seemed to account for their difficulties in learning as being due to the work or the teacher being 'boring'. I have to accept that perhaps they did find certain activities fun, or perhaps the subject or the delivery were indeed 'boring'. I am also led to consider if these statements may be to do with creating a version of themselves as 'successful' and rejecting the version of 'failure'. There were two pupils who presented clearer examples of behaviour which could be regarded as 'transgressions' and which can be understood as giving them control of their identity, but could also be interpreted simply as non-compliant behaviour.

Michael, although he had been given the opportunity not to take part from the beginning (and other pupils did opt out so they saw it as a real option for them) was uncommunicative in the interview process. He was fidgety, sighed a lot, avoided eye-contact, and his answers tended to very short with a number of "*dunnos*" and shrugs as responses. Yet he agreed to take part, stayed for the half hour of the interview and, as he seemed to be mature and in his own way, assertive. I think he would have walked out had he wanted to. I felt that there was something about the role he had been put into he was not happy about, whether it was being interviewed or perhaps being part of the particular group targeted: in this instance, my research method did not create the opportunity for him to give me more detail about his experience and what he thought.

Daniel was different. He was open, chatty, relaxed and spoke pleasantly but making his defiant view clear. Homework for him was not a problem; he felt he did not need help with reading and writing; when he didn't like subjects it was because they were boring; he did not understand why he had classroom support assigned to him, but he did admit to not doing his work and being disruptive in class. More detail about his story would also have been interesting to hear to find out more about what was happening for him but this was another instance of a puzzle the research method could not solve. I also was told that he did not go back to his class after leaving me but had to be 'found' in the school.

4.4 Group interview data

Due to reasons of my ill-health and periods of absence from work, the next time I met with these pupils was when they were in their fifth year at school. I again set out to them what the purpose of my research was, that they could opt out if they wanted to, and that their responses would be anonymised and not, in any way, fed back to the teachers. After asking for, and obtaining, the approval of the pupils, I taped each interview session. Each session was timetabled to last for a maximum of 30 minutes and each of them did, apart from one of them where the pupils spoke at length and seemed keen to express their points of view in some detail. I had previously checked with the SFL teacher about timings and I knew that it would be acceptable to over-run and so the session continued for around 50 minutes. This session raised particular issues and I will discuss it last.

I listened to each tape as soon as possible after the interview. As I did not know the pupils well enough to identify their voices on the tape but I wanted to bring my own remembering of what had happened to the analysis (such as any significant body language or who actually said what) I thought it best to do this as soon as I could.

I listened to each tape and made notes of what the pupils said for each question then, for each group, summed up what the main issues had been. A summary of what each group said is below.

Group A

Reading and Writing

While some subjects still involved a lot of writing, in class support with spelling or sentence structure was cited as being helpful (all of the pupils in this group had in-class support).

There was a view expressed by some that their reading skills, and their writing, had improved. When asked, they ascribed this improvement to teaching interventions from the SFL department.

In-Class Support

Pupils in this group were happy to have in class support and, when asked, said they thought if help was not at hand when they required it they could generally get the help they needed from the teacher or other pupils.

Supportive /Unsupportive Arrangements

The types of activities they identified as being helpful to their learning were:

- using computers
- listening (either to teachers or classmates)
- working with friends
- support from classmates
- use of visuals

I also wanted to find out what it was they thought was helpful about listening – was this a passive activity they were opting for or if it was supporting their learning, what

kind of ‘listening’ did they mean. When asked to explain they said that if they were ‘stuck’, a re-explanation could clarify things. Of listening to friends,

“when friends explain it, you listen to them”

I wanted to explore where and when the ‘working with friends’ was either acceptable or not (to teachers). They said that some teachers did either allow it or make it part of the lesson but others did not. When asked about this they said they thought it was because it involved talking and some teachers thought they should work quietly and do things by themselves.

They identified four features of classroom practice which enhanced the learning experience for them

- having things explained clearly – *“I like getting things explained out to me bit-by-bit”*
- where teacher demonstrates or describes as well as giving instructions
- appropriately differentiated work (different from that generally given)
- skills which were relevant to post school- life

Consistent with the responses from the first stage of the data collection, the following practices were identified as being supportive to learning

- collaborative working
- mediated learning
- non-text based inputs to learning.

Additionally cited as supportive were, learning experiences which were differentiated to meet their needs and the learning of skills which were relevant to post-school life.

Group B

Reading and Writing

For one member of this group reading and writing were difficulties. This was ascribed to the course requirements subjects he had chosen (Geography, PE, Biology). Although he had not had in-class support in S1 or S2 he had the help of scribes or differentiated writing tasks for these subjects now and felt that he had control in deciding if more or less help was required (this was organised by the SFL teacher who he could contact). He was the only one in this group who continued to have extra in-class support. The other (2) members of this group felt that their reading and writing had improved and when asked, said they felt this due to developmental reasons rather than any teaching interventions or strategies on their part.

In-Class Support

Only one pupil received in-class support (see above).

Supportive / Unsupportive Arrangements

The types of activities they identified as being helpful to their learning were:

- listening
- working with friends
- practical tasks

Again I wanted to explore what they meant by ‘listening’ and how it was helpful and I asked them to clarify what made it helpful. They agreed that they found it easier to understand things when they were talked over in the class, during the lesson.

I also wanted to explore what they meant by ‘working with friends’ and they revealed, in their descriptions of what they did, how it was the collaborative work which supported them to help each other when they worked with friends:

“when we work together it just makes it much easier – puts it in context where we can understand each other”.

I asked if it was ever a question of just copying what a friend does but they said no and spoke about how they helped each other to do the work:

“she(a friend) will help me to find things out”

They identified three features of classroom practice which enhanced the learning experience for them:

- teachers who take time to explain things and come round to check understanding
- teachers who always have time to help
- teachers who can make the difficult seem interesting

and one which they said was unhelpful

- when teachers talk and do not allow opportunities for questioning or discussion.

Similar to group A, the themes of collaborative working, mediated learning and non-text based inputs were identified as supportive. Also for this group interactions with the teacher were identified as significant.

Group C

Reading and Writing

As with the other two groups, some of the pupils felt that their own skills in respect of reading and writing had improved and, where there were still difficulties associated with this, for writing in particular, they identified other features which made the situation easier for them to manage: Some of them had dropped the subjects where a lot of writing was required (they mentioned History and Modern Studies)

One pupil (Anna) summed up a view that the others agreed with, an acceptance that it was something they just had to get on with

“sometimes...yes....it is difficult to write a lot....it isn't any easier (than it used to be).....it is just not possible to restrict the amount of writing you have to do, especially in subjects like history”

In-Class Support

There was consensus in this group that they did not like in-class support from SFL staff. The fact that it identified them as requiring help was mentioned but, what came over most strongly was that it could interfere with their thinking and/or even be unhelpful in that it could differ from what the teacher said. One pupil (Anna) gave a very full coherent response which seemed to sum it up for her and the others agreed:

“it really depends on who the person is, to be honest. Sometimes you might get a really annoying person and they say ‘do it this way’. One time they said to me ‘you do it like this’ and they got it wrong and I didn’t get a very good mark for my project. That was really annoying. It depends if you get on with them or not and it is really embarrassing the way it makes you stand out.”

Two other pupils added another two points of view which the others concurred with:

“even if you have difficulty with reading or writing it’s up to you – you have to push yourself”

“it’s not like you’re going to have someone do that (be at your side to tell you what to do) the rest of your life”.

Supportive / Unsupportive Arrangements

This group were able to be very clear about the strategies some teachers adopted which enabled them to cope better with the demands of the processes involved in writing. These involved:

- being given clear, unambiguous instructions as to what was expected so that they don't *"word it in such a way it makes you think they are asking something they're not"*
- support and practice with the various writing forms required – two pupils spoke of teachers who gave very specific forms of help: one had given tips about the structure required for answering questions and then gave practice and regularly checked on how they were doing while working in class and another teacher had given one pupil advice how to minimise the amount of writing required by noting down main points only.

This group were also quite clear, and very talkative, about the types of strategies they felt did, and did not, support learning.

Strategies which worked were:

- teachers who didn't give you the answer but helped you to find things out for yourself
- work which developed transferable skills for the world post-school (e.g. how to put together a clear summary of things rather than be given time to experiment with power point graphics)
- the opportunity to go over things in discussion rather than just work on their own (although one boy did express a preference for working on his own).

Strategies which didn't work were:

- tasks which were irrelevant either to what was being learned (e.g. decorating completed pieces of work in English or being given research tasks where the bulk of time was spent surfing the net looking for info rather than being helped to find the key sites and then using the time to research relevant info were agreed to be a waste of time)

- teachers who did not respond to requests for help at the time it was required – or those teachers who said to ‘go and think about it’
- lessons which only involved a series of writing tasks – to be done on your own
- when teachers set group work tasks and then did not interact in any way with what the groups were doing and so the groups tend to go ‘off-task’
- mixed ability groups where it meant different levels of work-rate from others in the class
- teachers going through work too quickly – not building in enough thinking time before moving on to something new
- the lack of an overview which would allow the pupils and the teachers to identify and manage the way course work demands and homework demands were timed throughout the school year.

Again, the themes of collaborative working and mediated learning were identified as being supportive to learning as was the need to develop skills for post-school life.

Also, for this group, there was consensus that extra help from support staff in classes did not provide them with the type of support they required to become independent, successful learners – and this was what they aspired to become.

4.5 Interpreting the data

What Were the Differences and What Might Account For Them?

The make-up of each group was slightly different. Group A, from Clifton Grammar (whose responses included the pupil I interviewed on his own) were all boys. They seemed happy to talk to me and answered all the questions put to them but their demeanour, and the fact that they were a bit less talkative during the interviews than the other two groups, led me to think they lacked confidence. Groups B and C were from Hillside High School, were mixed gender and appeared more confident. All of the pupils were communicative and easy to talk to and, as other research has

suggested, had well formed opinions about what teachers could do to help them with their learning (Postlethwaite and Haggerty, 2001).

Of the three groups, only Group A said they were happy to continue to receive SFL interventions to support their reading and writing and the other two groups expressed (apart from one pupil) dislike for such support.

From what Group C said, they had experience of working with teachers who had effectively built support for written into their classroom routine. If Group A had less or no experience of such support being provided then it is reasonable that they did not have a strong opinion about this. All three groups spoke of strategies they had found had worked well for them to help them develop their skills to become more effective learners and Group A's choice was no different in that respect. Or perhaps Group A more readily accepted the role given to them as pupils with learning difficulties requiring SFL intervention.

Areas of Agreement

After listening to all of the tape recordings, and noting the comments made by each of the pupils (this involved some re-listening as many of the comments made were quite quiet, often just to elaborate , agree, or sometimes disagree with what another pupil was saying) it was possible to identify agreement across the three groups in the following areas:

- the positive benefits to learning provided by being given the opportunity to discuss tasks/ideas/understanding with their peers
- the need for clear instructions and specific targeted help to support writing activities (although only Group A were happy to continue to receive such support through in-class SFL interventions and Group C had very clear views that they preferred that teachers should build this into help into their class teaching activities)

- interaction with the teacher, where the teacher mediated the process of learning through answering questions, discussion or checking levels of understanding for individual pupils
- the need for time, for listening or thinking, to allow the pupils to assimilate what they were learning

All of the groups also made reference to ‘dropping’ subjects which involved what they considered to be too much reading and writing – they seemed to accept that this is what had to be done. No-one voiced an opinion that suggested they thought that changes could be made to the way subjects were presented/assessed. Even Group C, who freely and enthusiastically offered very articulate, thoughtful responses to the questions asked, agreed that what was required, when writing tasks became difficult for them, were strategies to help them meet the demands the writing tasks. There was consensus across all three groups that it was they who had to change to (i.e. develop the necessary skills/strategies) or accept that curriculum choices would be limited on account of their lack of reading/writing skills. All of the pupils were generally happy with their school experience to date.

With reference again to Gewirtz’s (2002) modifications of Young’s (1990) five faces of oppression there is still evidence of marginalisation, powerlessness, and cultural imperialism in the arrangements as described by the pupils. They reported a mixed experience of teachers/practices which could be either helpful or not but felt they just had to accept whatever was available, as decided by the teacher. They had limited or no power in deciding how to go about their work although many had developed very clear views about what they found most helpful to them. Marginalisation was still apparent in that some pupils still received help from support for learning staff, marking them out as different from their peers, and also, it was practice for these pupils not to follow a full timetable of subjects as did their peers. As well as being a practice which marginalised the pupils I believe it also is an example of cultural imperialism. I am speculating here, but as schools are under pressure to produce results which evidence success, then it is in the interests of the school to manage arrangements which minimise examination failure and it is also in the interests of the

teachers, who may feel that they have to adopt a pedagogy which is restricted because it requires to serve goals of external accountability (Ranson, 2003), that they do not have to teach pupils who may require different teaching approaches than are normally used. Perhaps these factors influence decisions to provide lesser subject choice options for these pupils. I am not suggesting that these will be the only considerations, but that they contribute to decisions made. From what they say, it seems that pupils continued to be expected to fit in with classroom norms, and writing and the rate of work are cited as problems – the needs of the school and/or teachers to get through an amount of work in a particular time taking priority over the needs of the pupils and the pupils feeling it was they who had to change, not the systems.

What struck me strongly about these pupils (as it had when I first interviewed them in the first set of interviews) was how able, articulate, confident, thoughtful and perceptive they were. My own experience as a support for learning teacher and my own previous research study had influenced my assumptions about what to expect from the pupils in this study and also the methods I had used. I had considered using visuals as prompts to encourage responses, I had chosen a method of questioning (semi-structured questionnaires) because I thought they would provide support to help the pupils structure their answers and I had kept the questions simple and straightforward and relating only to issues of in-school arrangements. I am glad that I had not been able to find visual prompts for I think they would have been totally inappropriate, I think that these pupils were so able and thoughtful I think I could have asked them directly about issues of social justice and I also think that a narrative method, which provided opportunity for the pupils to tell their stories in more detail and in their own words would have provided richer, more detailed accounts.

My observations about the ability of the pupils raises issues about how those pupils targeted for support for learning interventions are identified. It is acknowledged that it is done on the basis of what they do not know (Clough and Barton 1995) but what strikes me in the two schools in this study is that I do not think these pupils would

necessarily have been thus categorised in other schools. I think what we see here is that the pupils in my study were only identified as in need of targeted support because they were being measured against a group of very able pupils. So because they are part of a school community where the majority of pupils are identified as being able to attain more highly than they as individuals are expected to be able to, they are labelled as pupils to be placed in a marginalised group and have to accept the social injustice which comes with that. I am not suggesting that it is acceptable for any group of pupils to be marginalised for I believe that every effort should be made to ensure there is social justice for all pupils, and that this can only happen when they are fully included in mainstream education, but what I am saying is that, from my experience of these pupils (although I infer this from only two 'snapshots'), I am puzzled that it has not been more easily possible to provide educational arrangements which do not identify and treat them as 'different' and require them to be marginalised.

The pupils themselves identified what they thought would be more helpful to them: collaborative learning; activities which encouraged independence and were relevant to life beyond school; teacher mediated learning, and support for individuals built into classroom activities. These aspirations on the part of the pupils do not seem to require anything 'different' to what I know routinely goes on in a lot of classrooms and (here I am speculating again) I would think that difficulties with reading and writing are not restricted only to this group.

To see what the teachers said and consider their views on working with pupils with additional support needs I now turn to the data analysis of the interviews with them.

4.6 Data analysis (teachers)

As it had been with the pupil transcripts, it was necessary to have some form of systematic methodology to record the data from the interviews. The body of academic work I considered in Chapter 2 suggested that, as a consequence of government policy (British and Scottish) foregrounding education as a means to achieve economic success, the resulting systems of performativity which were

required to identify, monitor and measure the targets education was to achieve, narrowed teachers' work, reduced their autonomy and lessened the opportunities for them to exercise their professional judgement (Ball, 1999; Gewirtz, 2002). The requirement to produce auditable evidence of success, it was maintained, led teachers to prioritise teaching which produced good examination results. A consequence of this can be that the needs of learners who have difficulties in an exam-oriented system are not given priority (Ranson, 2003). Taking the above into account, I wanted to be able to identify from what the teachers had said, if and how they felt able to exercise autonomy and professional judgement in their teaching; the extent to which the need for examination results drove their work, and if there was any evidence that the needs of pupils who had additional support needs were seen as lower priority than other pupils.

Previous research (Scruggs and Mastropieri, 1996; Croll and Moses, 2000; Povey, Stephenson and Radice, 2001; Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden 2000) identified that teachers tended to express the view that they lacked the time, skills or training to teach pupils who have additional support needs, in mainstream settings and this was further stated by teachers who gave evidence to the Mc Crone Inquiry. As Ainscow (1997) suggested that developing practices which are inclusive (of pupils who have additional support needs) requires an atmosphere which encourages and supports teachers to reflect on what they do and experiment with it, and it has been noted that where systems of performativity require teachers to teach to pre-determined performance criteria they are unlikely to risk not achieving them (Ozga, 2000), then this suggests that it is perhaps likely that the teachers in my study will have been unable to develop pedagogical approaches to meet the needs of the pupils who are the subject of my study. In analysing the data I had to take into account both what the evidence referred to (above) suggested, and also the evidence from what the pupils had said about types of teaching/learning which they thought did meet their needs.

Also, a previously identified feature of Scottish education, relevant to this study which seeks to identify ways in which teachers' practice has, or could, be made to meet the needs of learners who have additional needs, is a tendency for the teaching

workforce to be conservative (with a small *c*), cautious, compliant (Smout 1986; Humes, 1986; MacDonald, 2004) and I also wanted to see if there was evidence of that in the teachers I had interviewed.

Taking into account the evidence I was hoping to find relating to the areas identified above I read the transcripts of the interviews, I noted their responses under the following headings:

1. preferred/most used teaching approach
2. approaches to teaching/learning which work well for pupils with additional support needs
3. what could be done to improve teaching/learning for pupils with additional support needs
4. feelings of loss of autonomy
5. a tendency to be cautious or compliant
6. the influence of an exam-driven curriculum
7. lack of time or skill to teach pupils with additional support needs
8. views on the key goals of education

The views expressed by the teachers, taken from the transcripts, are summarised below.

Most used teaching approach

Teachers tended to use a mixture of styles/approaches with 5 of them saying they included a 'facilitator' approach, which suggests they interacted with pupils, allowed them to work independently and negotiate lesson content. In the descriptions of classwork activity which works well for pupils with additional support needs 7 out of the 8 made reference to either active or practical tasks. However, 5 of them said they also made use, at some time, of a formal teaching style with one teacher identifying it as the style he mostly used.

What would improve teaching/learning for pupils with additional support needs?

3 responses expressed the view that more in-class 1-1 support for pupils would help; 2 identified smaller classes; 2 more time for teaching pupils and 1 that pupils should have more choice in what they did and more practical work.

Feelings of loss of autonomy

None of the teachers made any reference to this (although it was not a question directly asked) and, in fact, 6 of the teachers spoke about ways in which they were able to devise tasks and adapt their teaching style to cater for the abilities of the learners. Teachers spoke of how they used active tasks (this was not restricted to practical subjects), games, used spoken instructions or tasks which involved speaking/ listening for pupils who had reading/writing difficulties, and, where possible, allowed pupils some choice in what they did and/or related work to the pupils' own life experiences. While references were made to the need to conform to the requirements of the syllabus and the assessment demands, all of the teachers spoke of ways in which they felt they managed to make learning accessible for pupils who needed extra support.

A tendency to be cautious or compliant

The majority of the teachers spoke with enthusiasm about the different ways they felt able to adapt teaching and learning activities to meet the demands of the curriculum while also being able to work towards wider social and emotional goals of developing the pupils' self-esteem and making the learning experience enjoyable for them. They spoke of being able, within any constraints of the system, to make choices and decisions leading to successful adaptations of their classroom practice. However, it is interesting to note that they often made reference to welcoming two current developments in Scottish education – *Assessment is for Learning* and *Curriculum for Excellence*. They seemed to be very willing to change their practices to suit the learning needs of pupils, and, while some of the classroom activities they

spoke of seemed quite inventive and very different from any traditional formal teaching with passive pupils, they were doing it within arrangements which encouraged them to take a different approach:

“you can also use games – and I do, I’ve even had them doing egg races up and down in here – not with eggs but with teaspoons and table-tennis balls – and if they got all the way down and back then they had to write and describe how it was done/how they felt”
(English)

There is also some evidence of a tendency of caution and compliance in that they tended to justify their actions within the contexts of policy directives. In the next quote from a science teacher when she says writing on the desk she really means that, the pupils wrote on work surfaces in the laboratory using coloured marker pens – which seemed to me to be very inventive and unusual, but again justified within the context of a national directive (Assessment is for Learning), and one which is given a high profile and encouraged within the authority.

“Well, the best activities ... the AIFL strategies...definitely... that is handing over responsibilities for their learning so, for instance, you can see I get them to, on entry, will have the learning intentions up there so they are clear ... we will have some sort of group work where they will either write on the desk , write on these boards so that we get feedback” (Science)

Exam-driven curriculum

Most of the teachers made reference to either the importance of exams or the difficulties they caused for pupils with additional support needs. For all but 1 of the teachers, the goal of examination success for pupils was set alongside other, wider social and emotional goals where exams were considered important, but not the entirety of what teaching was about. As summed up by one teacher:

“when August comes along, I like to know what my harvest is in terms of what it is these kids have achieved...and I imagine them pulling it out, as I have seen my daughters pulling it out, but, it is also feeling a part of...I have given that to them. So although.....exams

are tick the box important I do agree with them, they are important because we need them, but it is not my principal reason for teaching".
(Science)

The teachers were aware of how what they taught was directed by the formal, end-stage assessment model which the curriculum currently follows.

"you know, at the end of the day they have an assessment to sit, and therefore, I know what is in the assessment and I need to make sure they cover that content". (Modern Languages)

The teachers were sympathetic to the problems the current curriculum and exam model can cause for some pupils,

"Standard Grade – good course for most students –completely inappropriate for student who can't read or write properly" (English)

Home Economics teachers made less reference to any constraining forces imposed by an exam driven curriculum as the highly practical nature of their curriculum content seemed to make this far less of an issue.

Lack of time/skill

Lack of time to focus individually on pupils was referred to by 6 teachers and, while 3 of them suggested additional 1-1 support from classroom auxiliaries would be a solution, from the confident, enthusiastic and creative approaches to learning and teaching they identified, I do not think it can be assumed that this was down to any feeling, on their part, of lack of skills, but more the lack of time to give the pupils the attention they needed to be able to learn successfully. This was an issue for teachers for both practical and non-practical tasks.

"Well it depends what class they are in. If they are in like the Intermediate 1 where there is...Auxiliary, I mean that I couldn't do it without the Auxiliary... couldn't do it without a small class... if they were in Standard Grade class, 'cos there's no Foundation in Sciences, if they were in Standard / General class they would have to rely on their peers a lot more ... if it was a class of 20, it's a lot harder to ... get them...learning." (Science).

Referring to support for learning auxiliary staff in the classroom:

“Couldn’t do it without them” (Home Economics)

“it is good having learning support in languages , it makes a huge difference, I think , according people that I have spoken to about learning support issues , that having learning support teachers in the classroom makes a huge difference.having an extra member of staff in the room helps to keep people on task.....help explain a little bit which you don’t always have the opportunity to do when you’re trying to help everybody ...Also, just talking through planning with a learning support teacher for particular pupils is useful. You know, to help you plan better for pupils” (Modern Languages)

“I do think an extra pair of hands is very useful, we just don’t have that. It is not necessarily a teacher that is required, I just think that some of the pupils need an adult to keep them focused because sometimes when they are not very able and find the work quite challenging they just need somebody to keep them on task and focused in a smaller group.I only have Learning Support in once a week in that class and it makes such a difference to have an extra person” (English)

Two teachers did say they would have liked more time for discussion with specialist support for learning staff – whether that was an issue of their perception that they needed specialist advice or would have liked to share more of the burden of workload or time involved in planning I was not able to explore. One teacher favoured, generally, a formal teaching approach and appeared to want to delegate responsibility for pupils with additional support needs to others and again, I was not able to explore if it was lack of time or skills which contributed to this viewpoint.

Key goals of education

Only 1 of the teachers saw the goal of education being to prepare able pupils for university education. 5 of them saw the key goal as enabling pupils to develop life skills (and many references were made to confidence, self-esteem and emotional skills), 2 also said that helping pupils to pass exams was part of what education was for and 2 expressed a view that education had a role in supporting personal development.

“for me in particular the one (referring to the interview schedule) the one that stands out is – to enable pupils to learn skills they need for life beyond school.”

“my primary source of satisfaction is getting kids to be all those things that Curriculum for Excellence says. That is what I came in to teaching to do”

“to get them out there being self confident”

“to be able to take their learning further and enjoy their life would be why I went into teaching”

“I think they have to have the skills to be able to carry on beyond school”

All of the teachers I interviewed had been allowed to opt in to the process so I was not too surprised that they seemed quite comfortable and willing to talk to me about their views. However, as I referred to in the previous chapter, I was aware of the fact that power relationships created by organisational structures can influence respondents attitudes (Ball, 1994) and that asking individuals to report their experience involved them in an act of exposure which required a degree of courage on their part (Powney and Watts, 1987) and that, despite their agreeing to take part, these influences may have affected their responses. The teachers knew what my role normally was – that was an unalterable fact – the extent to which that affected their responses I can only speculate on, but I do think there were times when they were perhaps more guarded or defensive in their responses than they might have been had I been unknown to them and not connected with the education department. I thought that sometimes their responses suggested that they felt vulnerable and under some pressure to say things which were concordant with what might be perceived as ‘correct behaviours’. By more than one teacher, reference was made to there being a ‘right’ answer to the questions being asked.

One teacher on being asked about the goals of teaching referred to the questions on the sheet I had provided:

“I suppose the right answer is a mixture of all 3, all 4, sorry, but for me in particular the one that stands out is the 3rd”

I felt that sometimes the teachers, although able to talk openly and enthusiastically about what they did, were hesitant when it came to discussing why they made the decisions as they did. One teacher, after giving a detailed coherent account of her classroom practice and why she worked in the way she did:

“I am just aware of waffling quite a lot”
(She wasn’t waffling at all).

The issue of my usual role I did think was a factor which limited what was sometimes said. I had hoped that they would not use the opportunity to discuss matters of resources relating to individual schools or pupils and indeed they did not. However, I sometimes thought they were trying so hard not to bring such issues into our dialogue that they were avoiding bringing up the generality of time or resources and I sometimes had to prompt them. In the example below, after a longish period of hesitation, I actually made reference to how the conversation might go if I was there in my local authority officer capacity and then she gave a full answer.

Teacher *I think ... (pause)*

Me *...if I was coming with my local authority hat on and saying ‘what would you like?’ What would you answer?*

Teacher *I think time is an issue in teaching, I think, in general but it is just about managing, you know, it is something which needs to be done and therefore manage your time according to the time to make sure you can do that. Yet something that is expected of you so...you organise your timetable and can do it. What needs to be changed? If you had more time you could do it better. That would be it.*

One of the teachers I thought was, at times, trying to be provocative and challenging and adopted a somewhat impugning manner

*“what do **you** think works best to enable kids to learn?*
(but not waiting for an answer)

and, referring to the sheet with the questions

*“The key goals in teaching? ...did you make these up?
or is this from some official document... they are all much
the same actually, just worded differently ...”*

This made me think that I had to treat his answers circumspectly as I thought he may have been trying to challenge and provoke (whether me as a researcher or as a local authority representative I do not know). There is the possibility that he may have tended to understate the instances in his teaching where he was extending beyond the traditional, formal, academic practices, or that his somewhat negative views on children with additional support needs may have been overstated:

*“I’m kind of old fashioned in my teaching, I probably do more formal stuff
than many ...then demonstrate ... kids learn better sometimes from
demonstrations than on their own”,*

*“I think the primary school tends to look for problems that may
not be there...rather than describing them as lazy”*

*“they like doing experiments in pairs . Farting around with the
chemicals...that is what they want to do basically...I suspect it is
mainly that they are out their seat activitiesIt seems less like
learning to them...”*

I certainly thought I was not getting an authentic response from him. However, more than the others, he did seem to prefer a model of learning/teaching which relied on transmission of knowledge through language rather than any active or constructivist approaches.

4.7 Interpreting the data

In what the teachers said when interviewed there is evidence of them adapting their practice to do as best as they felt was possible to support the learning of pupils who have additional support. Consistent with previous studies (Scruggs and Mastropieri, 1996; Croll and Moses, 2000; Povey, Stephenson and Radice, 2001; Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden 2000; McCrone, 2000) they identified workload, lack of time and lack of skills as being limiting factors. The teachers in this study did seem to have autonomy to be creative about curriculum delivery at classroom level and made

use of less traditional, non-formal teaching methods, some more than others. However, where less traditional pedagogical approaches were used teachers tended to justify them within the contexts of central policy or guidance and that was what made it legitimate for them to use them. From this small sample of 8 teachers 7 made reference to broader social and personal goals of education and while there was reference made to confidence, self-esteem and emotional skills, there was tendency for the post-school skills mentioned being related to skills for employment. There was also evidence that they felt that the influence of an exam-driven curriculum restricted the extent to which they could divert from formal, exam-oriented work and thus there was the suggestion of a tension between what they felt they had to do to make sure academic outcomes were achieved. However, my research method did not enable this apparent tension to be explored.

There were issues relating to my own positionality and that power relations can influence respondents' attitudes but there were other issues too relating to what I was asking them to disclose to me about their views on their own teaching. Nias (1996) observes that teachers can feel passionately about their work, including their own professional skills and they can become involved in a way which merges their personal and professional identities. Golby (1996) maintains that teachers derive emotional satisfaction and security from the intimacy of teaching children and, when other people intrude into this area, which is professionally and personally important to them, it can provoke negative feelings. Taking this into account I can understand why the teachers I was asking to give me details about their professional skills and their attitudes to working with a certain group of pupils, would not necessarily disclose this information to me. Also, referring to Goffman (1959) who maintains that individuals manage the impression they give of themselves in any situation and that in the context of research they present what he referred to as 'the front room, which is deliberately kept well ordered and gives the 'right' impression, rather than the 'back room' which is less well maintained for presentation purposes and less likely to give what they think is the 'good' impression required, I think the teachers showed me the front room. Another factor influencing the level of authentic detail in their responses was how I approached the research task in that I was influenced by

what Nias (1996) notes that, due to the emotions that teachers experience either through personal interactions with pupils

“for anyone who has been a teacher, serious consideration of others feelings may lead one too close for comfort to one’s own” (p295).

This is a dynamic I was aware of and it made me cautious, tentative in my approach and at times unwilling to probe and question even when doing so may have produced richer information.

4.8 How the prevailing discourse restricts thinking and practice

While there is evidence of teachers in this study having the time, skills and autonomy to make adaptations to classroom practices to provide accessible learning experiences for pupils identified as having additional support needs, I believe there is also evidence that their capacity to act is circumscribed by a range of socio-political factors of which they may, or may not, be aware.

From a critical theory standpoint, and using tools of enquiry from within a feminist paradigm, in this thesis I have considered how international social and economic factors have influenced policy and practice in education in Scotland. Scottish education has traditionally placed a high value on academic attainment, order, and the teacher as the authority figure, and there is a collective narrative which supports a view that Scottish education is egalitarian and works well (Scotland, 1969; Ozga, 2005). In Chapter 1 I concluded that the modernisation of the teaching workforce, which developed as a consequence of the repositioning of education as a central factor in securing economic success (Doherty and McMahon, 2007), and the development of systems of performativity, accountability and surveillance, combined with particularly Scottish characteristics of education, have the potential to narrow teachers work to focus on the development of the particular skills and attributes required to produce responsible citizens who can, and will, contribute to a successful national economy and a cohesive society. I also considered how this can marginalise pupils who have been identified as having additional support needs (Ball, 1999; Gewirtz, 2002). In Chapter 2, I set out arguments that the changing conceptualisations of learning difficulties have also contributed to social injustice for

pupils through continuing practices of labelling and separation. Despite finding evidence of the teachers' willingness to change practices to make classroom experiences more inclusive, there is also evidence of the negative features suggested in Chapters 1 and 2.

The voices of the professionals from within the education community have been, and continue to be, represented in the national policy community through teachers' professional associations and local authorities. As part of the repositioning of education within the standards discourse and application of market principles to education, The McCrone Agreement (2001) introduced new contractual arrangements for Scotland's teachers, intended to create a teaching workforce able to meet the changing demands on education (the sub-title of the agreement is "*A Profession for the 21st Century*"). It also supported a continuing recognition of relatively high status and autonomy for teachers. This was expressed in Charter Teacher status, which recognises and rewards the attainment of a high degree of competence; the provision for teachers to have extended influence in policy development and planning through collegiate working, and arrangements requiring and supporting ongoing professional development. While such arrangements would seem to support the development of democratic professionalism, where teachers are able to have key roles as agents in shaping the teaching profession, in the data I collected there is evidence that, despite their expressed intentions to improve learning conditions for pupils, they do not engage with policy and practice in a way which changes the prioritisation of academic attainment, and that their actions are framed by the needs of external accountability, even although this can conflict with the needs of those learners who do not do well in such a system.

It has been noted by others that Scottish teachers have a tendency to be conservative, cautious and compliant and, consequently, they tend to adhere to traditional patterns of thought and practice which prioritise the academic aspects of education (Paterson, 1983; Humes, 1986; Smout, 1986; MacPherson, 1993; MacDonald, 2004). There was certainly some evidence of this in the teachers' responses, even where they had expressed their intention to create learning arrangements which better met the needs

of those learners who do not do so well in such a system. An example of the extent to which exam passes can be regarded as the culmination of teaching efforts was shown by the teacher who described (in 4.6) them as her “*harvest*”. How the needs of external accountability can influence practice can be seen where this teacher spoke of how an effective, non-traditional learning approach for pupils (active learning) was displaced by the over-riding importance of making the work done ‘fit’ the structure and time requirements of the course (as determined by end of course assessments):

*“we have a huge knowledge content to get through...
active learning just isn’t always possible”.*

Despite teachers in this study showing commitment to supporting pupils to develop skills beyond meeting the requirements of examinations, there was still evidence of unquestioning acceptance of academic conceptualisations of performance. One teacher who had spoken about the need for, and described some innovative teaching approaches in Standard Grade English to accommodate the needs of pupils who had difficulties with traditional reading/writing activities, still thought that formalised assessments could provide useful information about individuals’ learning experiences:

“formal assessment is useful.....you can gauge what students know”.

This teacher also, despite speaking of dissatisfaction with the current Standard Grade syllabus and the traditional approaches associated with it, concluded that the course was inappropriate for pupils who, “*could not read or write*”. He did not seem in any way to be uncertain about the totalising nature of such a description. Questions were not raised relating to who determines what counts as ‘properly’ in terms of reading and writing, whether such a condemning statement about pupils who can speak and understand English to a level which does not separate them from the majority of their peers was acceptable, or the discriminatory, socially unjust power of such a relative description, based on a definition of what others (those successful pupils who can read and write ‘properly’). It did not seem to be considered that the arrangements in place failed the pupils by requiring them to use, and be assessed through, forms of communication it is known they have difficulty with, but there was acceptance that the pupils were inadequate because they failed to meet the criteria required by the

system. In accepting this, the teacher was contributing to the perpetuation of the practices and the values associated with them.

The way in which the teachers frequently, despite their commitment to improve the learning for pupils identified as having additional support needs, made reference to the ways in which externally imposed constructs of what has to be achieved by individuals for them to be considered successful determined their practice evidences, as noted by Bottery (2006), how they are able to manage strategic decisions about content, but not how their practice is used. They gave many examples of how they altered classroom activities to make learning more accessible but, although they expressed reservations about the examination-led curriculum, there was general acceptance of a key role of schooling being to help all the pupils they taught to achieve the accepted version of success, that is, to do well in national, externally set examinations.

The previously referred to, long held ‘myth’ of the egalitarian nature of Scottish education, supported by contemporary information (e.g. the National Debate in 2002) has encouraged confidence in the existing system and has resulted in the lack of drivers for change and the continuation of meritocratic practices where certain types of skills and knowledge are privileged, combined with the systems of audit developed to focus on academic attainment as part of government policy to drive up standards to maintain national competitiveness can be seen to account for why there is a continuing a focus on academic aspects of education. However, it emerged for me a puzzle as to why the teachers in my study, given the views they expressed that such a focus on academic attainment is not sufficient or appropriate for all pupils, seemed to accept and perpetuate practices which support such arrangements. All (but one) of the teachers indicated their commitment to develop practices which were more inclusive and able to meet the needs of all learners, and frequent reference was made to the tensions created for them by having to achieve successful academic outcomes for all, but there did not seem to be any awareness of how the practices they employed, by continuing to working within these arrangements, could contribute to social injustice for their pupils. While it is true that I did not frame my

questions to them to specifically elicit responses on that issue, I did ask them (Appendix F) for their opinion on what could be changed to better support the learning of those pupils identified as having additional support needs. They seemed to accept and not question, that where pupils do not fit in with the dominant version of what constitutes success, their inability is identified through labelling them as having additional support needs, and they are treated differently from their peers and that it is the pupils who have to be normalised (through support so that they can best cope with current educational practice).

As I have set out in more detail in Chapter 1, the standards and criteria described in HGIOS? acquire meaning beyond the terms used due to the structure of Western thought where use of one term also evokes that which is opposite (Derrida, 1972) in Sargisson (1996, p88). Thus the audit process and the 'quality' described are presented as unproblematic concepts which should be aspired to. The pre-defined criteria in the HGIOS? documents, and the self and local authority evaluations through which they are re-iterated, lead teachers to accept and internalise the language, values and centrally determined vision of what counts as success in education, and they are required to produce auditable evidence of such. Teachers have become accustomed to surveillance of their practice, through self and external evaluations and inspections, and the collection of statistical data. As the effectiveness of their work is evaluated by such, it is in their best interests to help pupils to do well and match the pre-set criteria of what identifies a 'good' school or a 'good' teacher. From the viewpoint of feminist analysis, which questions the taken for granted assumptions and the relationship between these assumptions and the power relations they embody, it is possible to identify how these discourses at school level reflect those at wider local and national level and how these operate to influence the practice and thinking of teachers.

We can see in the teachers' actions exemplification of Foucault's 'docile bodies'. That is, individuals who accept, and seek to conform to, the views, values and expectations expressed in the discourses of the regulatory systems of social institutions which have developed as mechanisms to control and regulate the social

world. The discourses influence the way in which individuals come to understand the social world and how they react to events. Teachers therefore, accept, work within and perpetuate the organising principles of education: schools; their management structures and the power relationships they embody; the continuous improvement agenda; measurement of educational experience through exam performance; conformity to externally set standards of performance, and the labelling, for different treatment, of pupils regarded as having additional support needs. Teachers are not only affected by the regulatory effects on their understanding, thinking and practice of wider socio-political and educational discourses and those at school level, but they are also subject to those who occupy positions of authority within education and, as noted by MacDonald (2004) the existing hegemony in Scottish education can be so strong that teachers are reluctant to challenge it. It has also been suggested (Humes, 1994) in MacDonald (2004, p130) that compliance at school level is rewarded by career success. Taking into account the range of factors which support and encourage orthodoxy in thinking and practice at school level, it becomes easier to understand how, even where there may be dissonance between what teachers want to do and what they actually do (as seemed to be the case for the majority of teachers in this study), they are more likely to perpetuate than challenge existing arrangements.

It is not only teachers who are subject to the influence of the values, understanding and practices of the prevailing discourse in education. An example of the effect on pupils, of a system of education which has given privilege to academic performance, emerged in an account a Home Economics teacher gave of how the popularity of a course was greatly increased when it was described, not just as a life skills course, but one with associations with academic attainment. Speaking about a course which they previously had difficulty getting enough pupils to enrol to make it viable:

*“When it was labelled to be for children who would
be going to university or going to get jobs
elsewherethey were queuing up at the
door to get in.”*

It was not a course involving academic qualifications nor was it intended to be targeted at any particular group. Once it became labelled in a way where it was not

associated with non-academic aspects of the curriculum but linked, in some way to academic attainment, its status was enhanced and it became popular to pupils from across the whole year cohort.

Within an education system which is acknowledged as privileging skills and values relating to successful academic performance, and in two schools which do well (nationally and locally) in a system where success is evaluated in terms of numbers of good examination results, we can see too how the pupils labelled as having additional support needs are positioned within the workings of the school(s), in ways which marginalise them, and also, how they seem to accept this.

The exam orientated system and the practices of the schools create barriers to participation for certain pupils, firstly by focusing on skills which it is known pupils are weak at and using these skills as the means of assessment of their educational experience. They are created as an intellectually subordinate grouping (Benjamin, 2002) by applying,

“a range set of normative academic expectations that are inaccessible to them” (ibid, p5)

Secondly, the schools themselves further create barriers to participation and social justice by excluding such pupils from the full range of curriculum experiences available to all the others.

The pupils relationship to the prevailing discourse and how it affects their identities and actions leads them to accept their labelling and the limiting of their participation, even although there is evidence that this does sometimes conflict with what they seem to really want for themselves: there were many instances of this in the pupils' responses of which the following are examples.

Kevin, seeming to have been removed from Geography without fully understanding why (and therefore unable to give informed consent to this happening):

“I don't do Geography because I go to Learning Support. Me and Andrew were good at it, we got full marks for the test but just got pulled out.”

Anna, referring to what were her entitlements to be provided with whatever support she required but accepting that her individual needs were not important enough to be met:

“You can’t expect them to go, ‘Oh by the way, there’s this girl, she needs this that and the next thing, when they are teaching for one hour.”

John, who seemed to really want to go to Geography where he had experienced success but he had been removed from that subject to concentrate on developing literacy in the Support For Learning Department:

“One day I did a test and I got a certificate and I was really happy that I got full marks...I quite liked Geography...I get tempted to go up to Geography sometimes. I was going to go yesterday.”

Anna, accepting the way in which the requirements of course work focuses on skills she has difficulty with (because of a problem with her sight) and this cannot be changed:

“.....it is just not possible to restrict the amount of writing you have to do, especially in subjects like history”.

It is important to note here how, when I interviewed the pupils, I found them all to be articulate, with well formed opinions and sophisticated interpersonal skills and the relative nature of the labelling process which had categorised them as having additional support needs was apparent to me. I believe that in other schools, where there were a lesser number of more academically successful pupils, such pupils may not have been placed in the ‘additional support needs’ category at all. The following extract from a teacher’s response illustrates the power of the labelling and categorisation processes to create identities for the pupils which influenced teachers perceptions about them – despite evidence to the contrary:

“(in) a Standard Grade class I have one pupil.....he shouldn’t be in there...he struggles with literacy and numeracy..... (Assessment is for Learning techniques)they absolutely work....he actually decided last week that he would try some credit questions....and he actually got it....I can’t spend

as much time on these characters as I would really like to”.

Despite the fact that, by using a different pedagogical approach, this pupil had been able to demonstrate understanding of a concept from a complex area of the syllabus, he was still regarded as someone who should not be in that group because he needed more time to be spent on him to achieve that than others. He continued to be labelled as intellectually subordinate, although he had demonstrated that this was most certainly not wholly accurate.

Such labelling and categorisation is used as a basis for teachers to make decisions to restrict the curriculum experience of these pupils. As the pupils' responses have shown, this creates circumstances where they are not given full opportunity to participate in decision making; to express, and have account taken of their feelings about matters relating to their lives or to experience all that the education system currently makes available to other pupils. The continuing acceptance of a discourse which supports such practices, which despite intentions by the teachers to do otherwise, creates conditions which run counter to ensuring social justice for these pupils, remains a great concern for me.

4.9 Summary

In this chapter I considered the data from the pupil and teacher interviews. I found that the pupils had clear views about the types of practice arrangements they thought would best help their learning: collaborative working, mediated learning, non-text based inputs so that they could become independent, successful learners equipped with the necessary skills relevant to their lives beyond school. This is broadly in agreement with findings of other recent research (Pedder and McIntyre, 2006) which consulted with pupils about how they learned and what motivated them to do so. There was also evidence that the systems in place which identified pupils as having additional support needs were not socially just in that they marginalised pupils, denied them power and subjected them to cultural imperialism.

I found that the teachers, although there was evidence of a tendency to be cautious and compliant, adopted a range of pedagogical approaches to support the learning of pupils with additional support needs where circumstances made this possible. Mostly they believed that education should have a broader focus than only working towards exams, but the need to do so was often mentioned in their responses and having to do that, with pupils for whom academic attainment was not easy, created tensions for them.

The research methodology I used did not make possible detailed exploration of individual responses as a more narrative method would have. Also, I am conscious that my method was not inclusive of the voices of the participants at the writing up and evaluation stage. Had I been able to do so may it have yielded richer data by further developing context specific understandings of what they said, rather than only my interpretation?

This study is qualitative and based on small sample of 8 teachers and 17 pupils in 2 schools in 1 education authority and I make no claims that it is generaliseable. What it did find was that, in this sample, although set within the context of the competing agendas of social justice and exam attainment, there was evidence of capacity and willingness on the part of teachers to engage with issues relating to developing inclusive practices in their classrooms, although this was constrained by wider socio-political issues. The pupils in the study were able to identify teaching approaches which were helpful to them and these were broadly the same as those the teachers either already used or said they would like to be able to use or develop. The approaches to learning as identified by teachers and pupils articulate with the four capacities of the newly introduced *Curriculum for Excellence* (Scottish Government, 2009) framework: successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors

Chapter 5 Conclusion

5.1 Improving social justice for pupils

This study set out to consider the following research questions

- 1 What are the perceptions of pupils identified as having additional support needs about what their support needs are and how do they think they could best be met within classroom contexts?
- 2 What are teachers' perceptions of how pupils identified as having additional support needs can have their needs met in classroom contexts?
- 3 What implications are there for future practice produced by the contributions from pupils and their teachers in relation to the above?

By referring to academic texts, policy tools and the views of pupils and their teachers I explored the arrangements in place for pupils who have additional support needs. In this concluding chapter I consider what implications the findings of the study suggest for future practice in schools or for any further research. I also take into account that any consideration of future practice must be set within the context of the *Curriculum for Excellence* framework (Scottish Government, 2009)

In framing the study, I shared Somekh's (2001) view that:

“there is strong evidence that schools do not provide supportive environments for learning, but may provide the structures which cause many children to develop a failing identity.” (p38).

I still believe such a view to be correct, however, I have arrived at a better understanding of the complexity of the circumstances which make that so.

The work reported in this thesis is driven by my belief that the arrangements which are in place for pupils who have additional support needs are not socially just. There is a strong academic critique which argues such a position and this has influenced my thinking (e.g. Tomlinson, 1982; Bourdieu, 1989 in Noyes (2005 p 537); Clough and Barton, 1995; Thomas and Loxley, 2001). Within this critique there are also arguments (e.g. Tomlinson, 1982; Clough and Barton, 1995; Billington, 2000) that the social practices in education, including arrangements which label and separate pupils, are enactments of power that create identities for pupils which lead to their marginalisation and exclusion.

The views expressed by the pupils interviewed for this study evidence instances of practices that marginalise and exclude them and, while the pupils are aware of how these practices affect them, the workings of power relations are such that they generally accept the arrangements which are in place and the identities this creates for them. However, the study also found that although it may be that they are powerless to change the arrangements in place for their teaching, this does not prevent them from having views about how these arrangements could be improved. Consistent with other studies, (e.g. Postlethwaite and Haggerty, 2001) the pupils I interviewed had well formed views which provided information and this could be used to inform future practice.

The fact that pupils are not being routinely consulted for their views about their education is a social justice issue; the benefits of consulting with pupils about their learning are known, and if pupils were given the opportunity to participate in consultations about either their own learning or what happens in their schools they could play a key role in contributing to all of the four capacities Curriculum for Excellence (Scottish Government 2009) seeks to develop in young people:

- successful learners with enthusiasm and motivation for learning and openness to new ideas and determined to reach high standards of achievement
- confident individuals with physical, mental and emotional wellbeing and self respect and ambition

- responsible citizens with respect for others and a commitment to participate responsibly in political, economic, social and cultural life whilst developing a knowledge of the world and Scotland's place in it
- effective contributors with resilience and self reliance, who can communicate, work in partnership and apply critical thinking, solve problems and be enterprising and creative.

This suggests that the area of creating opportunities to involve pupils in consultations is a focus for future development. This would model inclusive practice and the pupils' experiences could provide informative insights into current practice and how this is experienced by them.

Another issue which arises from this study is the way in which pupils are identified to be targeted for additional support. The basis for selection is, as has been noted, based on what they cannot do, and this is relative to what others can do. Due to the relative nature of the labelling process it can vary from school to school and this can mean that that pupils can be subjected to practices of labelling and separating in one school, where in another they would not have been. The findings of this study concur with existing evidence that labelling and targeting can create socially unjust conditions for individuals and it seems to me that it is crucial if decisions are made about individual pupils that they cannot be taught in inclusive ways which do not marginalise them, then such decisions should never be taken lightly. This is an area where some critical analysis is required, and for teachers to be encouraged to interrogate and debate the arrangements by which the labels assigned to pupils limit their participation and perhaps there is a role here for initial teacher training to lead on the changes to thinking which would be required for this to happen.

5.2 How can teachers be supported to be creative, flexible, autonomous professionals?

When I began this study I was of the opinion that teachers could, and should, do more for pupils who have additional support needs. In the course of completing the

study, through considering the relevant academic texts and the views of teachers, I can see how the complex circumstances which frame their work can make this difficult for them to do.

The modernisation of the teaching workforce, with its emphasis on accountability and effectiveness, is based on ideologies and values which are different from those which have traditionally underpinned education. The teaching profession has moved away from what Fergusson (1994) in Sachs (2001, p156) terms as being a profession involved in practices which are informed by values which have been developed in a “*collective setting of debate informed by theory, research and evidence*” to becoming what Casey (1995) in Sachs (2001, p155) refers to as ‘*designer employees*’ who must respond to politically driven responses to global economic circumstances. The intention of the modernisation agenda may have been to create teachers as flexible, innovative and attuned to changing circumstances in a changing world, so that they can equip pupils with the necessary skills to contribute to economic growth, but there is evidence, as discussed in Chapter 1, that a consequence of managerialism is that it has limited their capacity for flexibility and creativity. So that the output of their work can be monitored and what they do can be ‘steered’, they have become increasingly subject to prescription and surveillance and it has been noted that this can limit their professional freedom and cause stress. Although it has been acknowledged that the extent of regulation and control in Scotland is less than it is in England, managerialist prescription still frames the work of teachers in Scotland. The standards of performance expected of them are clearly set out in *HGIOS?* documents and, while the emphasis in Scotland is on self-evaluation, it does not give teachers or schools the freedom to develop their own improvement agenda. They are subject to surveillance and control at the levels of national, school and self and it is, therefore, very difficult for them to challenge any arrangements which may be socially unjust for pupils. Additionally, for teachers in Scotland it has been suggested that a collective narrative of an idealised view of Scottish education as democratic and egalitarian has led to a widely held view that it works well for everyone and has ignored the fact that it is meritocratic and privileges

academic attainment. It has also been noted that teachers in Scotland tend to be conservative and compliant.

It seems that the circumstances described above do not provide the conditions which encourage reflection and experimentation which Ainscow (1997) maintains are required for teachers to be able to develop inclusive practices. Yet teachers are key to any changes to teaching and learning in schools, and within the terms of McCrone there is an expectation that they have a role in decision making at school level and contribute to local and national processes. The question is, within the parameters of the constraints mentioned above and elsewhere in his thesis, how can they be motivated and supported to challenge and change arrangements to improve teaching and learning for pupils who have additional support needs? Humes (2001, p13) maintains a range of circumstances are required to develop professional activism in teachers so that they can move away from uncritical acceptance of centralised prescription. This includes developing a personal commitment to change and improve their practice; recognising the contested nature of education; regular questioning of the discourse of professionalism and what it means to be a teacher and, that these require a supportive environment which provides time and opportunity to engage in reflection and research.

5.3 Can Curriculum for Excellence provide the solution?

It may be that *Curriculum for Excellence* will create conditions which will enable teachers both to develop and use professional autonomy as described above and this is certainly suggested by some of the wording contained in the latest documentation (sent to all teachers in May 2009). A possible interpretation is that it is offering teachers the opportunity to regain any lost professional autonomy:

“The framework is less detailed and prescriptive than previous curriculum advice. It provides professional space for teachers and other staff to use in order to meet the needs of all children and young people.” (p1)

However, it seems that any such autonomy is set within a degree of prescription. Systems of surveillance and accountability, evaluation and performance data collection are to continue. The government's intention to change how teachers work is clearly expressed:

“the experiences and outcomes are designed to enable new approaches in teaching and learning” (ibid)

It is relevant to note here that Carr (2000) maintains that centrally imposed curricula contribute to the deprofessionalisation of teachers. Will CfE be perceived as another centrally imposed directive teachers are expected to follow unquestioningly or will it provide opportunity for teachers to engage more actively with issues relating to the purpose of education and their roles as change agents within that?

There is further evidence of a commitment to managerialist principles in the document released at the planning stages in *Ambitious Excellent Schools* (SEED, 2004), which stated that the new reforms would deliver the following five outcomes:

1. heightened expectations, stronger leadership and ambition
2. more freedom for teachers and schools
3. greater choice and opportunity for pupils
4. better support for learning
5. tougher, intelligent accountabilities.

Outcomes 1, 3 and 5 reflect the discourse of managerialism, with its emphasis on consumer-led choice and systems of accountability. Outcome 2 does refer to more freedom for teachers but, as existing systems of surveillance and control are to remain in place, and as Outcome 5 refers to 'tougher accountabilities' it remains to be seen what degree of freedom will be allowed.

The type of teaching and learning it proposes emphasises experiential forms of learning such as collaborative working, active learning, enquiry and problem solving. Such approaches could accommodate the types of learning that the pupils

interviewed for this study and others (e.g. Pedder and McIntyre, 2006) as being more supportive of their learning than a traditional transmission mode with an emphasis on reading and writing. However, a possible reading of the *Curriculum for Excellence* proposals is that government has already decided what sort of learning activities teachers should engage in. This raises the questions of will it actually provide the 'professional space' as it says it will, and teachers use the 'space' to develop practices which are inclusive and can meet the needs of all learners? These are questions which can only be answered over time and suggest possible further areas for research: do teachers find the new curriculum structure provides contexts which support them to develop professional autonomy and, do pupils report that they experience learning arrangements which do create barriers to their participation?

Considering matters of how the professionalism and practices of teachers might be developed leads to another issue which I believe needs to be considered. A recurring theme in research about teachers' attitudes to teaching pupils with additional support needs is that lack of skills and training is an issue (e.g. Scruggs and Mastropieri, 1996; McCrone, 2000). What is needed is not just training of the technicised 'best practice tips for teachers' variety which Humes (2001) suggests have led to professional conformity, but more of a focus than exists at present on professional development opportunities which would lead to the development of the interrogating and reflecting skills and dispositions referred to above. This could, in turn, lead to teachers being able to reflect on and change power relations and practices which create social injustice so that, in future, as argued in Clark, Dyson and Millward (1998), equity, inclusion, representation, and participation are givens.

Curriculum for Excellence seeks to enable pupils to direct their own learning with an emphasis on personalisation, choice and personal relevance: the curriculum is to be geared towards individual needs. This suggests the potential for inclusive learning which would be to the benefit of pupils who have additional support needs. However, it also revisits the concerns considered previously about teachers' capacity to respond to the changes required, and how to build that capacity where it does not exist.

The shift in the framing of education to place emphasis on pupils developing their capacity to become self-motivated, reflective learners requires changes to pedagogy, removal of the constraints of the current curriculum model and changes to assessment practice. To achieve such fundamental change it is necessary to acknowledge and address the complexity of the change process and how it operates at the level of the individual, systems and organisations (Fullan, 1993). For lasting change, and to enable teachers to move beyond only responding to centrally imposed directives, attention needs to be given to how to give teachers time, training, voice and autonomy so that they can be fully involved in the change process and can become key actors in creating a learning society where creativity and flexibility are valued. Also, they need to be able use their voice and power to address any professional tensions which emerge by engaging with the debates about the role and purpose of education and claiming the 'professional space' *Curriculum for Excellence* says it will provide.

EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY Ed D PROJECT

About my project

My name is Liz Herd. I am writing an essay as part of my Doctorate of Education course at Edinburgh University. The essay is about what school pupils think about the sort of support which works best to help with classwork. To write my essay I will need to talk to some pupils and find out what their opinions are. I am asking you to help me by meeting with me to tell me what your opinions are.

What I am asking you to do

Firstly I will talk to each of you separately to give you the chance to tell me what you think. Then I will arrange a time to talk to you in groups.

Everything you say will be treated confidentially and not passed on to anyone at school. Your names will not be included in my essay so no one will know who said what. If something you tell me suggests that you are being harmed in some way I would have to tell someone at school about that.

I hope you will agree to help me with my essay.

Please fill in this section

School _____

Name _____

Class _____

I am willing to take part in interviews for Liz Herd's Ed D project

Signed

Date _____

Appendix B

Dear (*name of parent/carer*)

I am a student on the Doctorate of Education course at Edinburgh University. As part of this course I am doing a small research project to find out what school pupils think about what sort of support helps best with classroom learning. This will involve interviewing pupils individually and in small group. All pupil responses will be treated confidentially and the names of the schools and pupils will not be used in the final report.

I have the permission of the Director of Education, and () , the Headteacher, to carry out some pupil interviews in () School. I have visited the school to speak to all the pupils and fully explained to them what I plan to do and () has agreed to take part.

I am writing to you to ask your permission to interview (*name of pupil*) and have enclosed a stamped addressed envelope for your reply.

If you would like more information, I can be contacted at one of the following

Telephone
Email

Yours sincerely,
Liz Herd

Please complete this section and return it to me in the envelope provided:

Name of pupil _____

School _____

I agree / do not agree to _____ being interviewed as part of
Liz Herd's project.

Signed _____

Date _____

Semi-structured Interview Schedule (April 2005)

1. Can you tell me which of these things you have liked at secondary school?
 - Meeting new friends
 - Being in a different building
 - Having different people to work with than in primary
 - Being able to meet or work with friends from primary
 - Doing new subjects
 - Having a lot of different teachers
 - Clubs or activities

2. Which subjects have you enjoyed working in the most?
What do you think it is about these subjects that made them enjoyable for you?
 - The way the teacher taught (*What did s/he/they do that you liked ?*)
 - The activities you did in class (*What sort of things did you do? What did you like about them?*)
 - The other pupils in the class with you (*Who was in the class? Why did you like that?*)
 - The work was easy (*What made it easy for you – the reading/writing/group work/practical work – or something else?*)
 - The work was interesting (*What made it interesting for you?*)
 - You could get help when you wanted it (*Who helped you? What did they do that was good for you?*)

3. Are there subjects you have not enjoyed working in? (*What are they?*)
What do you think made them not good for you? Was it
 - The way the teacher taught (*What did s/he/they do that you do not think was good? Did (s)he say things you found difficult to understand/ not explain them properly?*)
 - The activities you did in class (*What sort of things did you do? What did you not like about them? Did you find them difficult? What made them difficult for you?*)
 - You did not get help when you wanted it (*What happened?*)
 - You could get help but you were not happy with it (*Why could you not get help not? What did you not like about the help you got?*)
 - The work was too hard or too easy (*What was it that was too easy or too hard?*)

- The work was not interesting (*What makes work not interesting for you?*)
 - The other pupils in the class (*Who were they? What was not good about that?*)
4. Thinking about time when either you or other people get help with work. What sort of help is available at (school name)?
- homework club
 - lunchtime club
 - study support
 - help from subject teachers in class
 - help from LS teachers in class
 - help from auxiliaries in class
 - classes in Learning Support department
 - easier work in classes for people who need it
 - senior pupils in classes
 - any other I have missed out
- a) Have you been given or gone along to any of these? Which ones? In which classes?
- b) What sort of help have you found most useful? (How does it help?)
- c) Is there any sort of help you do not think is useful? (What is it? Can you explain why you don't think it is good?).
5. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (*Ask to expand why they agree or disagree. Ask for examples.*)
- Teachers can usually give pupils all the help they need when work is difficult.
 - It is easy to ask for help when you do not understand.
 - Learning support teachers or auxiliaries in class is a good idea.
 - Lessons would be better if there was not so much writing?
 - Lessons would be better if there was not so much reading?
 - The homework we get is easy to do and helpful.
 - Working in groups makes it easier to learn.
 - I learn best when I get to work with my friends.
 - I learn best if there is someone who explains things to me on my own.
 - Small classes are better than large classes.

6. Are you asked about sort of help you would like in classes? Do you think you should be?
7. If you could make decisions about changes to be made in school to make learning better for pupils, what sort of changes would you want to make?
(Ask for expansion of individual point – make clear that anything can be suggested.)

Can you give an example of a time when this (your solution) would have helped ?

SUMMARY OF PUPIL RESPONSES (Q's 2&3)

Appendix D

School 1 - 9 Pupils (4 female, 5 male)

School 2 - 8 Pupils (male)

Subject	<u>No's who liked subject</u>				<u>No's who disliked subject</u>		Total
	School 1	School 2	Total		School 1	School 2	
Art	6	5	11		0	0	0
P.E.	4	5	9		1	0	1
C.D.T	4	3	7		0	0	0
H. Economics	3	6	9		0	0	0
Mathematics	0	2	2		0	4	4
English	2	2	4		1	2	3
History	3	1	4		1	3	4
Geography	2	0	2		0	0	0
Modern Studies	0	0	0		3	0	3
Computing	1	1	2		0	0	0
Music	2	2	4		0	1	1
German	0	1	1		0	0	0
French	1	0	1		3	0	3
Science	2	1	3		3	2	5
R.M.E	0	2	2		3	0	3
P.S.E	1	0	1		0	0	0

- Art, Craft & Design Technology, Physical Education, Home Economics are the most popular.
- No similar consensus of least popular subjects, Science, Maths and History are least popular but only identified as not liked by 5 and 4 pupils respectively.
- Some subjects, English, History, Science and Religious & Moral Education were identified as being liked by same or similar numbers who did not like the subjects.

Follow –Up Questions For Pupils (November 07)

To be asked of the pupils, in small groups - the supplementary questions to be asked where appropriate.

1. When I spoke to you before, just before you started 2nd year, some people said that too much reading or too much writing were things that made subjects difficult:
 - Did you think that this continued to be a problem in 2nd and 3rd years
 - If not, why was that?
 - Is the reading/writing easier for you now? What makes it easier do you think?
2. Some people mentioned help in class from extra teachers in the class or classroom assistants:
 - Do any of you still have that sort of help?
 - How helpful do you find it?
 - Would you like more or less of that sort of help? (Explain why it would be helpful or is not helpful.)

See separate sheet for questions 3 and 4

5. In the time you have been at this school, can you think of any lesson (or subject) you have really enjoyed (What made it enjoyable?)

In the time you have been here, what have teachers done, or what could teachers do, to make learning easier for you?

3. What sorts of lessons or ways of teaching have you found worked best to help you learn?
(Here are some ideas of different things you might have done.)

PROMPTS ON CARDS GIVEN OUT TO PUPILS

PICTURES

VIDEOS

DIAGRAMS

COMPUTERS

WORKING WITH FRIENDS

PRACTICAL SKILLS

DRAWING

LISTENING

TALKING TO OTHERS

(Discuss with pupils how any identified strategies were useful.).

4. Brief questionnaire for pupils to complete at the time:

1. Working as part of a group helps me to learn. YES / NO

How often do you work in groups?
ALWAYS
MOST OF THE TIME
SOMETIMES
NEVER

2. I find it helpful when teachers take time to explain things to me YES / NO

How often do teachers do that?
ALWAYS
MOST OF THE TIME
SOMETIMES
NEVER

3. In my classes we are all given the same work to do. ALWAYS
MOST OF THE TIME
SOMETIMES
NEVER

4. I am happy with the way I have been taught at this school?

YES ALWAYS
MOST OF THE TIME
SOME OF THE TIME
NEVER

Teachers

Semi Structured Interview Schedule, November 2008

1. What type of learning activities do you think work best to enable pupils to learn?
E.g. whole class lessons/ peer tutoring or group work / individualised tasks where you are available to support pupils.
2. What kind of strategies / approaches do you mostly use in your teaching?

FORMAL	(whole class lessons / didactic / you decide lesson content)
DEMONSTRATOR	(use role playing / observed demonstrations/ pupils follow examples to master skills)
FACILITATOR	(pupil teacher interaction / pupils work independently / negotiated lesson content)
DELEGATOR	(set problem and allow pupils to devise what to do / review different outcomes / being a resource called on when needed)
3. What teaching or learning activities do you think works well for pupils who have additional support needs?
 - What could work better?
 - What needs to be changed to make that happen
 - How could that be achieved?
4. What, for you, are the key goals of teaching?
 - To help pupils gain qualifications so they can get good jobs
 - To make sure all pupils can fulfil their potential in and beyond school
 - To enable pupils to learn the skills they need for life beyond school
 - To support pupils to become flexible, reflective learners
 - Other.....

School: Hillside High School
Script Number: 4
Pupil Name/Letter: Anna (very articulate, strong opinions)

(Needs work to be challenging/interesting/some special arrangements because of her vision totally inappropriate for her need – embarrassing for her - sometimes she has to explain her position – teachers don't know – embarrassing).

I French – it's annoying because they have cut it down for 2nd year. Art, Music – these are the main ones and sometimes English. At primary school it was my main favourite subject but we don't do the same fun things in English we used to do. We used to write stories a lot, now we just read.. It's fine, but I prefer writing things.

So you like creating things?

Yes

French. Can you try and tease out for me what it is you have liked?

Well I like learning a foreign language – I think that's interesting. I found it interesting to learn different words – it's quite easy once you have picked up the basics. I don't know.. I just liked learning new words and things. I like other cultures.

So it is the content and the activities about these things you have liked?

Yes I suppose so.

Anything about the teachers influenced you to like them?
The way they taught, presented the work?

Ehm.. well.. I would say. I like my Art teacher, she's really nice, but that doesn't affect my art all that much. It doesn't make all that much difference because.... because I'm quite good at it. English...I think maybe if I had a different teacher I might like English more - nothing against her but I think, maybe, if it were done in a more creative way... and she always seems to choose books which are very depressing – Call of the Wild and another book

that was quite depressing... She irritated me a bit at one point, I don't know why, maybe she affected the English.. I don't know.

2. *I haven't enjoyed Science very much. I mean, the thing is, when you see a film on TV I think "how interesting" but in school it's just told in an uninteresting way... (pause)*

So what is it that you do in Science that is different from your expectation? What kind of things do you actually do?

Well, I don't know, it's hard to say, I don't know... I never liked it .. (Pause)

What were you expecting?

I really don't know what to expect because we didn't have much in primary, so I didn't really know.

You mentioned films and things...

Things like genes and futuristic futures and that kind of thing I've watched on television and found that intriguing but at school – it's just.. I mean some of it's quite interesting but I just don't find it.. I don't...

Is that to do more with the kind of subject are – electricity – as opposed to gene therapy..?

Maybe

What about the activities you do, do you do interesting things?

Well we do experiments, things like that. Some of it's quite annoying because it's teamwork. Everyone else is doing it really quickly and I'm like, "What?" I can't catch on what is going on. When it comes to writing a report I'm like, "What were we doing again?".

Why can't you catch up?

Maybe something to do with vision, but, maybe something to do with I'm just not very good at teamwork.

Would you say that is an accurate statement of yourself, that you're not very good at teamwork?

Yes, I'm not very good at working in a team. I can work in twosomes, but not in a team of 3 or 4 or 5.

Is that because you don't like it?

Because you have to do things like vote, and agree as a team and I obviously don't agree as a team. I don't know. Also, there are lots of things in Science that are just dull – photosynthesis, wow! I mean... I wouldn't mind one lesson on photosynthesis, for example, but to have like loads, it's just (grimaces). It's not going to benefit me in future life is it?

Any classes you think you would have liked better, or done better in if there had been help available?

Ehm... maybe Science perhaps. We had a lot of different supply teachers because our teacher had been off so much. And maybe if I got a bit of help. My friend would help me with board work and things like that.

You find board work difficult?

Well, yes, ehm, even from the front I still can't see the board and ehm..

So, that is something I'm not clear about. If it's on the board you can't read it, you don't just find it difficult.

Not really. In primary school it was a really small classroom and my seat was really close to the board and she did really big writing so that was fine, but at High School classrooms are much bigger.

Do teachers make the same accommodation as your primary teachers did? Bigger writing or something to help you specifically?

Well what they used to do in primary was that they had a little book and they wrote what was on the board in the book for me which was quite handy. Now, I sometimes get a sheet to look at what is on the projection board but sometimes.. ah.. I hate it when we get new teachers and I have to ask, "please can I get this.." I hate having to say and I wish teachers would just tell them, I hate having to say, especially when there's a whole class there.

So the school (interruption by a teacher). The school could do more so the help was in place without you having to ask? That would be helpful for you?

Yes.

Any other observations about that?

Well, in Maths, I got moved down a group for some reason, I think because there was too many people in the top set. Probably better for me anyway because I can't work at a very fast pace, and also because they didn't know anything about it. At one point I was given this HUGE, MASSIVE, thing like that size (gesticulates) and the writing was so huge it actually made my eyes go (grimaces) it was too big, massive. I didn't need that size at all and it was too hard to find my way through it.. like one diagram took up a whole page.. I didn't like that. But then everything got fine and I just had a separate chat with teachers because I just could not follow what she was doing in class. So she just told me that it was and I had sheets that were just blown up 1.5 – twice the size and that was find.

This brings us onto another question I was going to ask – Are you asked about the sort of help you would like in classes?

Yes I think so.

But you weren't in that instance were you?

No, it was fine after a while when the proper teacher came back. And now one of them knows me and that's fine.. but I don't think the other Maths teacher knows.. but I used to have him.. don't know if he knows or not but I am going to have to say.

So the onus is on you to draw it to the teacher's attention?

Yes

Just to sum up, if you could dictate the changes that should be put in place in High School to help you, what would they be?

Ehm.. well.. if everyone just knew about it so I didn't have to ask, can I have it on paper and things like that. If

teachers could just tell them, I don't like having to do that, and I hate supply teachers in that sense as well, because they don't know. I mean I definitely forgive the school, you can't expect them to go !”Oh by the way, there is this one girl, she needs this that and the next thing when they are teaching for one hour”. Can you? So I don't like that, I have to get someone to help me and that's not fair on the other person if they don't want to help me and get on with their own work.

Do all subjects provide help for you equally well?

Ehm. I think most subjects are fine, I'm dropping Geography recently because there is too much mapping and that's too hard and I'm catching up on work in like Maths and that, subjects I am a bit slower at, mainly because of my vision. I mean, my Geography teacher was nice, she really was very nice and she did all she could but I still found it really difficult so I'm dropping it. And.. well. Like I said in Science there was loads of different supply teachers.

So there's no subject that doesn't cater for your needs at all?

No (interruption by teacher) – I don't think so.

That's good to know – anything I haven't asked that you think I should have.

No don't think so.

To sum up. The main points you have raised. You would find it easier if all teachers always knew and could respond without you being the one to take the issue forward.

Yes. I remember (laughs) my last teacher yesterday ehm. Most teachers don't even notice me.. said “Do you wear spectacles!”? I said “No, he said, “Because you are peering a bit” and I said “Yes”. “Have you visited an optician?” “Yes” “But you don't have any spectacles?” “I have contact lenses”

So she obviously didn't know, and it's terribly embarrassing. She said it extremely loud so everybody heard. It didn't really matter but it is extremely annoying when that kind of thing happens.

Was she new to the school?

No, she's not new, but the thing is she knew me, I'm sure she knew me because I was in the corridor with the first year and she said "See you girls next week". I don't know if she knew or not.

Can I ask which subject?

Latin – We have only had one period of it so far.

(Not enough time to do questions 4 – 5 – pupil's detailed account re her very individual situation seemed worth exploring).

School: Hillside High School
Script Number: 7
Pupil Name/Letter: Michael

(Tense, no eye contact; not very communicative; seems not to engage with some of questions).

1 PE

What is it about PE you like?

Just like doing sports.

Are you good at them?

Mhm

What's your best

Discus

Do you do competitions?

Did one on sports day.

2. English, RME.

Would you say they are the ones you like the least?

Yes, they are the ones I liked the least.

What is it about them you don't like? Is it to do with the teacher or the things you do?

The work

The work. What kind of things do you do?

Too much writing.

Is writing something you have always not liked doing?

Mhm.

Why do you think that is?

What, writing? Just haven't got very good handwriting.

Is it the speed, or the spelling, or do you get tired?

Get tired.

And English and RME, do you get a lot of writing to do in these classes?

Mhm

What about other classes?

Maths is fine, I'm good at Maths

French, History, Geography

They're alright.

What about the writing you have to do in them?

Don't get too much writing

So is that OK? (He shrugs)

If you have a difficulty with writing, are there any classes that give people help with writing?

A classroom assistant you mean?

Or anything – do any teachers organise help?

Mhm

What kind of help do you get?

Get a classroom assistant

And what does the classroom assistant do to help?

No reply

Does she do writing for you, or check it?

She keeps on checking it.

But you said there you don't want help. Why is that?
Whjat don't you like about it?

Makes me feel stupid.

Do you think there is any kind of help that wouldn't make people feel stupid? Could teachers do anything to make writing easier for you?

Don't know.

Are there any classes that do that? Any times that the teacher makes the writing easier for everybody so people don't need help?

No.

5 i) Shakes head..

So you think that doesn't happen?

What, that I get lots of help?

No, that teachers give you all the help that you need.

Sometimes

What makes the difference? Is it some teachers?

(Fidgets, sighs loudly) No reply

What kind of help would you like teachers to give you.

None just do it like everyone else. Without any help

ii) *Eh? Mhm*

iii) Shrugs. *What time is it?*

iv) *Mhm*

v) *Dunno.*

Do you find reading OK?

Nods

vi) *Don't get much homework*

vii) *What?*

Repeat the question – *nods*

What is it about groups that makes it easier to learn?

You get to talk to your friends.

What subjects do you do group work in?

Graphic art. Modern Studies.

What is it you do in groups?

Write things down and talk about rights.

viii) *Dunno*

ix) *Dunno.*

x) *Doesn't matter.*

6. No response

7. Work in groups, talk to my neighbour.

Science Teacher – Clifton High School

INT. . How long have you been teaching?

ST Well, since 1974 with a gap for bringing children up, sort of early '80s, mid '80s

INT. Is teaching the only job you have done?

ST No, I was a trained technician in human genetics for research.

INT. What subjects...have you taught?

ST Now you're asking, I have taught science, I've taught chemistry, I've taught biology, I've taught computing

INT. ...and what is it you teach here now?

ST Biology... and a bit of science.

INT. Which schools have you been in?

ST Well I've been at Crief, I've been at Carnoustie high School, I've been ... did supply cover for a wee bit in Berwick High School, Berwickshire High School, Kelso, Eyemouth, Earlston

INT. Right. So you've been in a ...

ST Yes (inaudible from INT.) and I had... Berwickshire High School was part time, temporary for 10 years.

INT. And how long have you been here?

St Coming up eight

INT. Eight years

ST Eight in February.

INT. OK. As I said I spoke to...to pupils, pupils who had additional support needs just generally about what kinds of things work for you , so I want to explore with some teachers what they think about what works and what doesn't. OK? So, just very generally what type of learning activities do you think works best to enable pupils to learn? And I have put some suggestions on the sheet, but I mean that's...that's just suggestions.

ST Well, the best activities is ... the AIFL strategies...definitely... that is handing over responsibilities for their learning so, for instance, you can see I

get them to, on entry, will have the learning intentions up there so they are clear ... we will have some sort of group work where they will either write on the desk, write on these boards so that we get feedback ... totally active all the time, and then...peer discussion, peer... assessment and then on exit they have a (inaudible) there's either boxes over there, do you see those, wee boxes – red / green

EH Oh...right...ah ha

ST Or they have to give me a password to exit which will be summarising what they have learnt, which is not necessarily a fact it could be that they have worked better together ...or something ... there is a bit of formal stuff sometimes but it is mainly...it's a mixture really... it has to have whole class lessons occasionally... have to bring them in and pull them out, but their...

INT. For what kind of things would you do whole class lessons for?

ST ... well, if I'm doing the digestive system, for instance, there I would have them round and we have a discussion on that and they would go away and do an activity...sort of mixing and matching .

INT. OK. You said that, you know, assessment is for learning strategies, that you really liked ... prior to the AIFL would you have located your teaching style in the same place?

ST ...no I would have been...the way I was brought up to teach is didactic ... absolutely formal... with, it had investigation, well experiments and things so ... it was very boring for them all I think

INT. And that was because...

ST ...that was how we were trained to teach. We were trained to teach to impart knowledge which of course is different now.

INT. In terms of children that have additional support needs and I mean just kids who are part of the class, but they have been pointed up as having learning difficulties not the ones who have specific physical problems and that kind of thing. What sort of learning activity do you think works well for them?

ST Well...it's the active learning ... and I have an Intermediate 1 class which is eleven in their and we have formed, this year we have formed a company where they took on the responsibility for it, there is very little notes, they have, the ones that can do the note taking get it a summary at the end. Someone takes the notes and hands them on so its... when it's run by themselves with... direction from me it is...has worked very well...

INT. So, active learning

- ST Yep...and they like demonstrations, they like bringing in ... they just ... it is not always successful, but it, if tried to teach them formally, because they can't read and write some of them, they can't read the PowerPoint's, so I haven't really used PowerPoint's ...they have used ICT skills we have done loads of stuff and games and stuff, they've got a lot of ICT stuff.
- INT. So using more active learning different activities
- St ...loads of activities...
- INT. ...gets round the fact that they maybe have literacy difficulties.
- ST Yeah, because they can actually retain it in their brain if they keep repeating it ... at that level anyway.
- INT. And are you able to do that most of the time with kids with learning difficulties?
- ST Well it depends what class they are in. If they are in like the Intermediate 1 where there is...Auxiliary, I mean that I couldn't do it without the Auxiliary... couldn't do it without a small class... if they were in Standard Grade class, 'cos there's no Foundation in Sciences, if they were in Standard / General class they would have to rely on their peers a lot more ... if it was a class of 20, it's a lot harder to ... get them...learning.
- INT. Right. So what kind of activities would there be (inaudible) Standard Grade class...
- ST Standard Grade class, I have one actually, I have a child in my brain at the moment, he shouldn't be in there and...Um... we have got someone with a 6th year in helping, so there quite good at helping. The person that I sit him beside is somebody that looks after him and helps him... So...
- INT. ...helps him to do....
- ST ... well help him to understand stuff ...
- INT.does he have literacy difficulties?
- ST He has...I would say so , although they have never been totally diagnosed...it is not as sever as some of them in that Intermediate 1 class but he does struggle with literacy and numeracy... his writing is just about unintelligible really.
- INT. ... and the kind of AIFL techniques ...
- ST ...they work. They absolutely work He actually last week decided that he would try some Credit questions ... so what I can do , I've been doing all

sorts of things that for somebody like Kim it benefits if ... we have a sentence... it is like speed dating so I would have a sentence on the board and number 1 would say that to number 2 ,, and number 2 would have to repeat it back and then they move round and when he did that and came and sort of had to check it by me and he actually had got it . That is a sort of active way of learning... and it works but you can't do it all the time though , this is the thing, and our syllabus is so huge that , you know, I can't spend as much time with these characters that I would really like to in that type of Situation

INT. Right, can you kind of tease out, a wee bit, for me what are the constraints (inaudible)

ST Some of those constraints are time and we have a huge knowledge content, which we have to get through ... it is time and clear that we are not going to get through that. So we don't have...as much time as I would like to spend with somebody like that , although I try and create it ... the ways of creating it ...it is all AIFL stuff ... so time, if the class is big which is... this one is about 18 kids in this area its...the materials and resources that are needed we can't have one to one investigations say sometimes have to have groups of 5 so...you know... unless he's properly included or whoever else it is ...there's problems there ...there's problems writing notes form they ... PowerPoint although we have summary notes and booklets but the reading of that technical language is difficult the words of biology are incredible difficult for just an ordinary person so, you know, you've got the heart names the digestive names that's difficult for him ... those are the main problems

INT. So there is a kind of aspects of the syllabus content wise that ... active learning isn't always possible within the time constraints that you have

ST That's it and if the (inaudible) comes contractions comes about, hopefully, that will...maybe becomes that because it is going to be process skills rather than...

INT. ...content

ST ...content so, these guys might get a better chance.

INT. That kind of answers the last bullet point in question 3, I think. What needs to be changed, what needs to be achieved?

ST The content needs to be...we have always said that everything (inaudible) needs to come out of this far too much. Content. Biology, Higher. Standard Grades or whatever.

INT. The last question, and again I have put prompts there just for help you maybe don't agree with any of these and have other ones. What for you are the key goals of teaching? What brought you into teaching?

ST What brought me into teaching ...well I didn't know what else to do ... I know from(inaudible) my headteacher that, the head at my school said I was going to be a geography teacher. No, definitely not. Nope. So , anyway, that's not what brought me into teaching BUT over the years what has, I think , in my schooling was pretty rubbish really...I was made to feel thick . I was made to... not...feel an achiever academically or that sort of stuff. A bit a pain in the butt I think to a few teachers. Anyway, when I came into teaching I was absolutely determined that I would never, ever, ever ever make a child feel that they couldn't do anything. Ever. And I don't think that I have ever used that word 'thick' to anyone , and I intend never to do it ... so I ...my ...my primary source of satisfaction is getting kids to be all those things that Curriculum for Excellence . That is what I came into teaching to do.

INT. So much broader social, emotional goals.

ST Oh yeah. Definitely, but ... I think also the other thing having been out of teaching and seen work experience at the front that is another goal in showing them that what they are trying to learn and think, thinking is something I am really interested in. How they think, what they do. How those skills transferred into work places and caring and sharing for other people out in the community, so they are there basically to make my pension possible ... the third thing is , also, I do get enjoyment seeing kids achieving academically , but also physically and everything else , I do ... when , I have to say , when August comes along , I like to know what my harvest is in term of what it is these kids have achieved ...and past certificate, and I imagine them pulling it out , as I have seen my daughters pulling it out , but, it is also feel a part of ...I have given that to them . I have given them the ways of doing that to get there. So although...exams are tick the box important I do agree with them they are important because we need them, but it is not my principal reason for teaching...

INT. ...it is part of

ST It is part of it , my first part is to get them out there being self confident . Really

Science Teacher – Hillside High School

ST I have been teaching close to 30 years. I started at Portobello High in Edinburgh, then moved to the Royal High in Edinburgh, and then down here. I've been here 4 years.

INT. And was teaching your first job?

ST Yes. I can't say that I ever wanted to be a teacher, but it seems to have worked out that way.

INT. So what brought you into teaching?

ST My day who said 'you'd better go and do something useful'. That's probably it actually. I moved to Edinburgh and Moray House and then ...thought it was Ok so...

INT. You will have had plenty time to develop lots of thoughts about it in that time I'm sure... Now, these are just a starter for discussion.

ST Well, learning activitieswork best... Well, in Science we do a mixture of all these things ...is it specifically the less able kids that you're interested in?

INT. For this one just ...generally

ST Generally. Well I would say a mixture of all of those which is what we do.

INT. Is there any one you think the kids prefer or ...

St ...they prefer ...well...I'm sure over a long ...period of the week they would prefer to have a good mixture of it ...if you pinned them down , they like doing experiments in pairs . Farting around with the chemicals...that is what they want to do basically...

INT. Is it because they like farting around or do they get something from working in pairs?

ST I suspect it is mainly that there out their seat activities.

INT. Right.

ST It seems less like learning to them then...

INT. ...and out their seats socialising ?

ST Exactly. I think that is how they would describe it anyway ...but when you include that in all the rest of the stuff then it becomes part of the learning process... what do you think works best to enable kids to learn?...I think a

mixture of them all. Definitely. I don't think if you could stick with one all the time... it wouldn't work.

INT. The next question is really just to see where people position themselves on the continuum from the very formal to the negotiated ... and you have kind of answered part of the four – you think a mixture is required. But if you had to choose one of them what do you think you use most?

ST ...probably demonstrate. Yes I would think so. I'm kind of old fashioned in my teaching, I probably do more formal stuff than many ...then demonstrate ... kids learn better sometimes from demonstrations than on their own there is no doubt about that. They go back to mucking around a wee bit ... if you can get them to listen at a demonstration then you make the demonstration interesting it certainly works well in science. But I mean again all of these are ... (*inaudible*)

INT. ...you sort of dip in and out of them ...

ST ...aye, exactly.

INT. What about the ...you said you do a wee bit formal and the demonstrating...what about the other end of the continuum?

ST Yes, I'm reading the descriptions there...well if I started talking about a one-to-one, sitting at a desk me explaining something, I do that a lot.Particularly with the higher classes and the fourth year ...pupils work independently...yes, sometimes they do they have investigations they do, practical work they do, they work independently ...negotiated lesson content...I'm not sure what that means...

INT. I think it is along the lines that it fits in with the kind of delegator in the last one that you would give them a puzzle like the bit in Apollo 13 where you give them the box of stuff and say you have to make...something to get the astronauts home...

ST There's not a lot...I would say ...I don't do that a lot and I don't think that's done a lot in science as it is taught just now...when the new Curriculum for Excellence comes in with its new ideas ...maybe they will move more that way ...I mean, we do have investigations that we do from first year up which I suppose could come into that where they are set some sort of problem ...there is a bit of help involved ...

INT. ...in term of learning tool, do you think it is less successful that the other methods?

ST Well I ...yes, I would think so actually. Certainly if...I think if you could set the work that kind of way with very intelligent kids. Who have the ability to understand what the problem is in the first place and a logical mind to go

about solving something ... but I think for the majority of kids they need much more formalised help in order to help them learn.

INT. More structured, more direction, that kind of thing

ST Yes. That's a good way of putting it...yes.

INT. Thinking a wee bit more specifically then about kids with learning difficulties, kids now called additional support needs, the kind of kids that your just told are going to be in your class , your Support for Learning ...and you have to include them in your teaching...what kind of things work well, what doesn't work? What do you need to make it better? That kind of thing.

ST What works best is if you can understand the level at which they are going to learn and you aim your teaching at that level. Now whether that is giving them another kind of worksheet, differently worded, simpler or something of that sort. I don't like that but...

INT. What don't you like about that?

ST Well, I don't like worksheets full stop. And I don't think that simplifying a worksheet make a difference to a kid that's having trouble. I think that talking to them, and not having too high expectations, expectations beyond what is possible for them ...works. And if they understand what you are trying to get them to do, and they think 'aye, I can do that' then ...that works. I think they work best at that kind of thing. That approach. These kids don't like reading for a start most of them, so (inaudible) so I just don't understand.

INT. When reading is a problem ...readings a problem...

ST Reading is a problem, or just learning is a problem, just basic learning...you find most kids with learning difficulties are not great readers in the first place, you know. It is a major part of their problem ...So I tend to talk to them personally and explaining what it is they are being expected to do ...but not having too high expectations, I'm not saying you limit the expectations ... then treat them as if they are thick ...not expecting them to...

INT. ...expectations relevant to their needs

ST ...exactly

INT. And how easy is it to get information for you to make these kinds of choices? Where do you get information from?

ST That's a good point...I think with experience, you can , very quickly suss out who needs help, and what kind of help , and where the problems are going to be and on a more formalised basis we get information from primary schools

when they come into first year ...but it is rarely updated actually. Here, anyway.

INT. And in terms of a good tool for adapting the learning to meet needs would it be better to have that kind of thing?

ST It would be better if it was updated and kept ...more up to date. I think as a starting point when they come up to first year it does help ...we at least have some idea of what they have been like. It is something, but it is not very accurate either. Some better update information as they progress through school ...

INT. You say that you feel that it is not sometimes very accurate information...

ST ...primary descriptions don't tie in with what you are actually working with. You can be working with a kid and you go and read their file from primary and it doesn't make sense whatsoever.

INT. Is that because ... do they underestimate, or overestimate?

ST I think they overestimate, they over-sympathise with the problems ...so that their strategies in primary school are slightly more sympathetic than they will be up here ...like if a kid is more lazy than ...that's the reason for his underachieving, laziness rather than having some other problem ...I think the primary school tends to look for problems that may not be there...rather than describing them as lazy. We have one here just now – (pupil name) who fits that category perfectly.

INT. What about the last one then... the

ST The key goals in teaching? ...did you make these up or is this from some official document?

INT. It's not from an official document, it's from very old research that you possibly did at college ...Bennett's learning styles, and it has not been updated much since it was written in the 50's 60's? ...a long time. But what there is a lot more now is teaching styles. So you get lots of descriptions of ...teaching styles and teaching aspirations ...so I kind of took the two ideas and divvied them up that way ...so, no, it is not an official document. I've tried to base it on theoretical ...

ST So there not one that's more important than the others ...for some people...the first one may be the prime reason for getting through a school and go on and do something they know will be better ...for many other kids number two and three...four . They are all much the same actually , just worded differently ... trying to get them to leave school and have as much ability to go on and do whatever they want to do , or succeed in what they do ...so I wouldn't have said there a huge difference , certainly between the four

point there. So I would say for a large number of people, say, going onto university, number one is probably what they are looking for ...

INT. ...qualifications aspect

ST ...but certainly not for them all.

INT. OK. Is there anything else that ...you think would be relevant to teaching kids with support needs within current arrangements

ST Well, we struggle from lack of numbers of people to help ...there are only a handful of people who go round with the kids to help ...

INT. So what is it they bring to a class?

ST They bring ...well again it depends on the problems the kids are having, if it is a learning difficulty then we can usually keep them on task ...and help explain things ...while the teacher is...dealing with the other nineteen ...behaviour problems we can suppress that a bit better ...there is not enough of them.

INT. No, because that gives each child more teacher time.

SH I have a first year class just now and they have two people who should definitely have someone with them all the time ...and there is nobody there at any time

INT. So what kind of things do you think suffers in terms of the kids learning?

ST Almost the whole learning experience ...because they are easily distracted and therefore they latch onto anything instead of focusing on what they are meant to be doing. But if someone is with them they can at least pin them down a wee bit .So for the less able kids ... a bit of one-to-one help is invaluable.

INT. But don't have enough time for that...you need people ?

ST (nods)

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